

STUDIES IN JUDAISM

SECOND SERIES
LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
TORONTO

BY

S. SCHECHTER, M.A., LITT.D.

AUTHOR OF "SOME ASPECTS OF RABBINIC THEOLOGY"



LONDON

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1908

275010EE

296

Sch 19a

rev. 2

TO MY WIFE
IN DEVOTION AND GRATITUDE

General 8 July 1888
Stechert, 1888

164721

PREFACE

The volume presented herewith to the public, under the title, "Studies in Judaism, Second Series," forms, like the preceding series published some ten years ago, a collection of detached essays and articles written at long intervals and called forth by various occasions.

The first two essays, "A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts," were written shortly after my return from Egypt, when the examination of the contents of the Genizah was still in its initial stage. Since then, the Genizah has been constantly revealing treasures to the world, to which only volumes of description could do justice. The publications containing matter coming from this treasure-trove would by this time make a little library, whilst the editions of Sirach fragments and the literature of controversies provoked by the publication of the original of this Apocryphal book might fill a fair-sized shelf in themselves. But the work is only just beginning; and as the field is so large and the workers so few, I confess that I look with envy upon the younger students who may one day, at least in their old age, enjoy the full and ripe fruit of these discoveries in all their various branches and wide ramifications.

The third and fifth essays, "The Study of the Bible" and "On the Study of the Talmud," were called forth by my appointment as Professor of Hebrew in the University College, London. The one on "The Study of the Bible" was intended to explain my attitude toward a problem closely connected with a subject I was called upon to expound to my class. The views I expressed on that occasion were described by a friend as "rank scepticism," doubting an interpretation of Jewish history now generally accepted as the final truth, and by men of a younger generation looked upon even as an ancient tradition. To this accusation I must plead guilty, and even confess that my scepticism has kept pace with the advance of years. The one "On the Study of the Talmud" was meant to give some directions to theologians attending my class, as to the way they might best profit by their Rabbinic studies. The essay being practically a plea for a scientific study of the Talmud, it was thought that it might be profitably read by wider circles.

The fourth essay, "A Glimpse of the Social Life of the Jews in the Age of Jesus the Son of Sirach," was suggested by my work, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira," when preparing the finds of the Hebrew originals of Ecclesiasticus for the press. It assumes,

with many writers, that the Synagogue in the time of Sirach was, in most of its important features, already fairly developed, and that as a consequence the religious life, at 200 B. C. E. or thereabouts, did not greatly differ from what we know it to have been at 60 B. C. E.; though, of course, the Hellenistic persecutions must have greatly contributed toward emphasizing and intensifying it in various respects. The essay in question is, however, mostly devoted to the social life of the Jews, and tries to show how little such generalities as the common conception of the conversion of a Nation into a Church, answer the real facts. The Synagogue became a part of the Nation, not the Nation a part of the Synagogue.

The sixth essay, "The Memoirs of a Jewess of the Seventeenth Century," forms a review of the well-known diary of the Jewess Glückel von Hameln (1645-1719). I found much pleasure in writing it, as the diary is quite unique as a piece of literature, and bears additional testimony to the fact that our grandmothers were not devoid of religion, though they prayed in galleries, and did not determine the language of the ritual. Theirs was a real, living religion, which found expression in action and in a sweet serenity.

The eighth essay, "Four Epistles to the Jews of England," was published as a protest against the appearance on English soil of certain theological catchwords, which struck me as both misleading and obsolete. It is only fair to state that the writer's opinions did not pass unchallenged, and provoked much controversy at the time.

The seventh and ninth essays are closely connected; but while "Saints and Saintliness" deals more with the thing "saintliness," "Safed" treats more of saints, and the two are intended to complement each other in various ways.

A prominent English writer in a moody moment remarked, that one would love to be a saint for at least six months. I do not think that there are many who cherish a similar desire, but there may be some few who would not object to an opportunity of observing or dwelling with a saint for a few moments. They may perhaps learn that there is something better even than "modernity"—which is, eternity.

For the rest, these essays written in a popular style, all technicalities being strictly excluded, need no further comment. The authorities for my statements in the text are given at the end of the book in a series of notes, while the essay on Safed is accompanied by two appendixes, giving, especially in Appendix A, new

matter from manuscripts upon which I have largely drawn in the text.

My thanks are due to the editors of The London Times, The Sunday School Times (Philadelphia), The Jewish Quarterly Review, and The Jewish Chronicle (London), in which periodicals some of these essays appeared for the first time. I am also indebted to Mr. I. George Dobsevage, of New York, who was always at my call during the progress of the work. My thanks are furthermore due to Rabbi Charles Isaiah Hoffman, of Newark, N. J., and Dr. Alexander Marx, Professor of History in The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, who helped me in various ways in the revision of the proofs. But I am under special obligations to my friend Miss Henrietta Szold, the able Secretary of The Jewish Publication Society of America, not only for the Index, but also for her painstaking reading of the proofs, and for ever so many helpful suggestions by which this volume has profited.

S. S.

January, 1908.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts I | I |
| A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts II | 12 |
| The Study of the Bible | 31 |
| A Glimpse of the Social Life of the Jews in the Age of Jesus the Son of Sirach | 55 |
| On the Study of the Talmud | 102 |
| The Memoirs of a Jewess of the Seventeenth Century . . | 126 |
| Saints and Saintliness | 148 |
| Four Epistles to the Jews of England | 182 |
| Safed in the Sixteenth Century—A City of Legists and Mystics | 202 |
| Appendixes | 289 |
| Appendix A | 292 |
| Appendix B | 302 |
| Notes | 309 |
| Index | 331 |

A HOARD OF HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS¹

I

The Genizah, to explore which was the object of my travels in the East (1896-1897), is an old Jewish institution. The word is derived from the Hebrew verb *ganaz*, and signifies treasure-house, or hiding-place. When applied to books, it means much the same thing as burial means in the case of men. When the spirit is gone, we put the corpse out of sight to protect it from abuse. In like manner, when the writing is worn out, we hide the book to preserve it from profanation. The contents of the book go up to heaven like the soul. "I see the parchment burning, and the letters flying up in the air," were the last words of the martyr R. Chanina ben Teradyon, when he went to the stake wrapped in the scrolls of the Law. The analogy of books with men was so strongly felt that sometimes the term "hide" was used even in epitaphs: "Here was hidden (*nignaz* or *nitman*) this man." When R. Eliezer the Great was buried, they said, "a scroll of the Law was hidden." It was probably this feeling that suggested the injunction to hide worn-out copies of the Pentateuch in the grave of a scholar. More often, however, they dug a grave for the dead books themselves in the

cemetery, or hid them in some sort of shed adjoining the synagogue.

Happily for us, this process of "hiding" was not confined to dead or worn-out books alone. In the course of time the Genizah extended its protection to what we may call (to carry on the simile) invalid books; that is, to books which by long use or want of care came to be in a defective state, sheets being missing at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end, and which were thus disqualified for the common purposes of study. Another class of works consigned to the Genizah were what we may call disgraced books, books which once pretended to the rank of Scriptures, but were found by the authorities to be wanting in the qualification of being dictated by the Holy Spirit. They were "hidden." Hence our term "Apocrypha" for writings excluded from, or never admitted into, the Canon. Of course, such books came into the Genizah in a sound condition; but the period at which synods and councils were able to test the somewhat indefinable quality of inspiration is now so remote that these "external works" have met, by reason of long neglect, with the same fate of decomposition that awaited sacred books, by reason of long and constant use.

Besides these sacred and semi-sacred books the Genizah proved a refuge for a class of writings that never aspired to the dignity of real books, but are none the less of the greatest importance for Jewish history. As we know, the use of the sacred language

was, among the Jews, not confined to the sacred literature. With them it was a living language. They wrote in it their letters, kept in it their accounts, and composed in it their love-songs and wine-songs. All legal documents, such as leases, contracts, marriage settlements, and letters of divorce, and the proceedings as well as the decisions of the courts of justice, were drawn up in Hebrew, or, at least, written in Hebrew letters. As the Jews attached a certain sacredness to everything resembling the Scriptures, either in matter or in form, they were loth to treat even these secular documents as mere refuse, and when they were overtaken by old age, they disposed of them by ordering them to the Genizah, in which they found a resting-place for centuries. The Genizah of the old Jewish community thus represents a combination of sacred lumber-room and secular record office.

It was such a Genizah that I set out to visit in the middle of December, 1896. My destination was Cairo. The conviction of the importance of its Genizah had grown upon me as I examined the various manuscripts which had found their way from it into English private and public libraries, and which had already led to important discoveries. I therefore determined to make a pilgrimage to the source whence they had come. My plan recommended itself to the authorities of the University of Cambridge, and found warm supporters in Professor Sidgwick, Dr. Donald MacAlister, and especially Dr. Taylor, the Master of St.

John's College. To the enlightened generosity of this great student and patron of Hebrew literature it is due that my pilgrimage became a regular pleasure trip to Egypt, and extended into the Holy Land.

Now that the sources of the Nile are being visited by bicycles, there is little fresh to be said about Cairo and Alexandria. The latter, at which I landed, is particularly disappointing to the Jewish student. There is nothing in it to remind one of Philo, whose vague speculations were converted into saving dogmas, or of the men of the Septuagint, whose very blunders now threaten to become Scripture. Nor is any trace left of the principal synagogue, in whose magnificent architecture and tasteful arrangements the old Rabbis saw a reflex of "the glory of Israel." Cairo is not more promising at the first glance that one gets on the way from the station to the hotel. Everything in it calculated to satisfy the needs of the European tourist is sadly modern, and my heart sank within me when I reflected that this was the place whence I was expected to return laden with spoils, the age of which would command respect even in our ancient seats of learning. However, I felt reassured after a brief interview with the Reverend Aaron Bensimon, the Grand Rabbi of Cairo, to whom I had an introduction from the Chief Rabbi, the Very Reverend Doctor Herman Adler. From him I soon learnt that Old Cairo would be the proper field for my activity, a place old enough to enjoy the respect even of a resident of Cambridge.

I must remark here that the Genizah, like the rest

of the property of the synagogue in Cairo, is vested in the Rabbi and the wardens for the time being. To this reverend gentleman and to Mr. Youssef M. Cattai, the President of the Jewish Community, my best thanks are due for the liberality with which they put their treasures at my disposal, and for the interest they showed, and the assistance they gave me in my work.

I drove to this ancient Genizah accompanied by the Rabbi. We left our carriage somewhere in the neighbourhood of the "Fortress of Babylon," whence the Rabbi directed his steps to the so-called Synagogue of Ezra the Scribe. This synagogue, which in some writings bears also the names of the prophets Elijah and Jeremiah, is well known to old chroniclers and travellers, such as Makreese, Sambari, and Benjamin of Tudela. I cannot here attempt to reproduce the legends which have grown up around it in the course of time. Suffice it to say that it has an authentic record extending over more than a thousand years, having served originally as a Coptic Church (St. Michael's), and been thereafter converted into a synagogue soon after the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt. Ever since that time it has remained in the uninterrupted possession of the Jews. The Genizah, which probably always formed an integral part of the synagogue, is now situated at the end of the gallery, presenting the appearance of a sort of windowless and doorless room of fair dimensions. The entrance is on the west side, through a big, shapeless hole reached

by a ladder. After showing me over the place and the neighbouring buildings, or rather ruins, the Rabbi introduced me to the beadles of the synagogue, who are at the same time the keepers of the Genizah, and authorised me to take from it what, and as much as, I liked.

Now, as a matter of fact, I liked all. Still, some discretion was necessary. I have already indicated the mixed nature of the Genizah. But one can hardly realise the confusion in a genuine, old Genizah until one has seen it. It is a battlefield of books, and the literary productions of many centuries had their share in the battle, and their *dissecta membra* are now strewn over its area. Some of the belligerents have perished outright, and are literally ground to dust in the terrible struggle for space, whilst others, as if overtaken by a general crush, are squeezed into big, unshapely lumps, which even with the aid of chemical appliances can no longer be separated without serious damage to their constituents. In their present condition these lumps sometimes afford curiously suggestive combinations; as, for instance, when you find a piece of some rationalistic work, in which the very existence of either angels or devils is denied, clinging for its very life to an amulet in which these same beings (mostly the latter) are bound over to be on their good behaviour and not interfere with Miss Jair's love for somebody. The development of the romance is obscured by the fact that the last lines of the amulet are mounted on some I. O. U., or lease, and this in

turn is squeezed between the sheets of an old moralist, who treats all attention to money affairs with scorn and indignation. Again, all these contradictory matters cleave tightly to some sheets from a very old Bible. This, indeed, ought to be the last umpire between them, but it is hardly legible without peeling off from its surface the fragments of some printed work, which clings to old nobility with all the obstinacy and obtrusiveness of the *parvenu*.

Such printed matter proved a source of great trouble. It is true that it occasionally supplied us with loose sheets of lost editions, and is thus of considerable interest to the bibliographer. But considering that the Genizah has survived Gutenberg for nearly five centuries, the great bulk of it is bound to be comparatively modern, and so is absolutely useless to the student of palæography. I had, therefore, to confine my likings to the manuscripts. But the amount of the printed fragments is very large, constituting as they do nearly all the contributions to the Genizah of the last four hundred years. Most of my time in Cairo was spent in getting rid of these *parvenus*, while every piece of paper or parchment that had any claim to respectable age was packed in bags and conveyed to the forwarding agent to be shipped to England.

The task was by no means easy, the Genizah being very dark, and emitting clouds of dust when its contents were stirred, as if protesting against the disturbance of its inmates. The protest is the less to be ignored as the dust settles in one's throat,

and threatens suffocation. I was thus compelled to accept the aid offered me by the keepers of the place, who had some experience in such work from their connexion with former acquisitions (perhaps they were rather depredations) from the Genizah. Of course, they declined to be paid for their services in hard cash of so many piastres *per diem*. This was a vulgar way of doing business to which no self-respecting keeper of a real Genizah would degrade himself. The keepers insisted the more on *bakhshish*, which, besides being a more dignified kind of remuneration, has the advantage of being expected also for services not rendered. In fact, the whole population within the precincts of the synagogue were constantly coming forward with claims on my liberality—the men as worthy colleagues employed in the same work (of selection) as myself, or, at least, in watching us at our work; the women for greeting me respectfully when I entered the place, or for showing me their deep sympathy in my fits of coughing caused by the dust. If it was a *fête* day, such as the New Moon or the eve of the Sabbath, the amount expected from me for all these kind attentions was much larger, it being only proper that the Western millionaire should contribute from his fortune to the glory of the next meal.

All this naturally led to a great deal of haggling and bargaining, for which I was sadly unprepared by my former course of life, and which involved a great loss both of money and time. But what was worse,

was, as I soon found out, that a certain dealer in antiquities, who shall be nameless here, had some mysterious relations with the Genizah, which enabled him to offer me a fair number of fragments for sale. My complaints to the authorities of the Jewish community brought this plundering to a speedy end, but not before I had parted with certain guineas by way of payment to this worthy for a number of selected fragments, which were mine by right and on which he put exorbitant prices.

The number of fragments procured by me amounts, I think, to about a hundred thousand. The closer examination of them has begun since my return to England, but it will take a long time before an adequate account of them is possible. Here I can offer only a few brief remarks about their general character, which, of course, must be taken with due reserve.

The study of the Torah, which means the revelation of God to man, and the cultivation of prayer, which means the revelation of man to God, were the grand passion of old Judaism; hence the Bible (Old Testament) and the liturgy constitute the larger part of the contents of the Genizah. The manuscripts of the Bible, though offering no textual variations of consequence, are nevertheless not devoid of points of interest; for some fragments go back as far as the tenth century, and are thus of great value, if only as specimens of writing; others are furnished with marginal glosses, or are interspersed with Chaldaic and Arabic versions; whilst some are provided with quite

a new system of punctuation, differing both from the Eastern and the Western. Regarding the Apocrypha, I will here refer only to the fragment of the original of Ecclesiasticus, which it was my good fortune to discover on May 13, 1896, in the Lewis-Gibson collection of fragments. The communications which were then made by Mrs. Lewis to the press led to the discovery of further fragments at Oxford. All these undoubtedly come from a Genizah, and justify the hope that our recent acquisitions will yield more remains of these semi-sacred volumes. As to liturgy, the Genizah offers the remains of the oldest forms of the worship of the synagogue, and these throw much light on the history of the Jewish prayer-book. The number of hymns found in the Genizah is also very great, and they reveal to us a whole series of latter-day psalmists hitherto unknown.

Next to these main classes come the fragments of the two Talmuds (the Talmud of Babylon and the Talmud of Jerusalem) and Midrashim (old Rabbinic homilies). They are of the utmost importance to the student of Jewish tradition, giving not only quite a new class of manuscripts unknown to the author of the *Variae Lectiones*, but also restoring to us parts of old Rabbinic works long ago given up as lost forever. It is hardly necessary to say that both Bible and Talmud are accompanied by a long train of commentaries and super-commentaries in Hebrew as well as in Arabic. It is the penalty of greatness to be in need of interpretation, and Jewish authoritative works have not escaped this fate.

The number of autograph documents brought to light from the Genizah is equally large. They extend over nearly seven hundred years (eighth century to the fourteenth). What a rich life these long rolls unfold to us ! All sorts and conditions of men and situations are represented in them : the happy young married couple by their marriage contract ; the marriage that failed by its letter of divorce ; the slave by his deed of emancipation ; the court of justice by its legal decisions ; the heads of the schools by their learned epistles ; the newly-appointed " Prince of the Exile " by the description of his installation ; the rich trader by his correspondence with his agents in Malabar ; the gentleman-beggar by his letters of recommendation to the great ones in Israel ; the fanatics by their thundering excommunications ; the meek man by his mild apologies ; the fool by his amulet ; the medical man by his prescriptions ; and the patient by his will. To these may be added a vast amount of miscellaneous matter, philosophical and mystical as well as controversial, which is the more difficult to identify as almost every fragment bears witness to the existence of a separate work.

All these treasures are now stored up in the Library of the University of Cambridge, where they are undergoing the slow process of a thorough examination. The results of this examination will certainly prove interesting alike to the theologian and the historian.

A HOARD OF HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS¹

II

The examination of the contents of the Genizah is not yet concluded. "The day is short and the work is great," and the workman, if not actually "lazy," as the Fathers of the Synagogue put it, is subject to all sorts of diversions and avocations, such as lecturing, manuscript-copying, proof-correcting, and—novel reading. The numberless volumes of "fresh divinity" which an indefatigable press throws on the market daily take up also a good deal of one's time, if one would be "up to date," though many of them, I am sorry to say, prove, at best, very bad novels.

As stated in the previous article² on the same subject, there is not a single department of Jewish literature—Bible, Liturgy, Talmud, Midrashim, Philosophy, Apologetics, or History—which is not illustrated by the Genizah discoveries. Naturally, not all the discoveries are of equal importance, but there are very few that will not yield essential contributions to the department to which they belong. How a Weiss or a Friedmann would rejoice in his heart at the sight of these Talmudical fragments! And what raptures of delight are there in store for the student when sifting and reducing to order the historical documents which the Genizah has furnished in abundance, including even

the remains of the sacred writings of strange Jewish sects that have long since vanished. Considerations of space, however, forbid me to enter into detailed descriptions; these would require a whole series of essays. I shall confine myself in this place to general remarks upon the fragments in their various branches, the trials and the surprises awaiting one in the course of their examination, and some of the results they have yielded up to the present.

The process of examining such a collection is necessarily a very slow one. In the ordinary course of cataloguing manuscripts, you have to deal with entire volumes, where the study of a single leaf tells you at once the tale of hundreds and hundreds of its neighbours and kindred. The collections from the Genizah, however, consist, not of volumes, but of separate loose sheets, each of them with a history of its own, which you can learn only by subjecting it to examination by itself. The identification of Biblical fragments gives the least trouble, as they are mostly written in large, square characters, whilst their matter is so familiar that you can take in their contents at a glance. Still, a glance will not always suffice, for these fragments are not only written in different hands, testifying to various palæographic ages, but many of them are also provided with Massoretic notes, or with an unfamiliar system of punctuation. Others are interspersed with portions of the Chaldaic or Arabic versions. They all have to be arranged "after their kind," whilst as specimens of writing they

have to be sorted into some kind of chronological order. To judge by the writing—which is, I admit, not a very trustworthy test—the Genizah furnishes us with the oldest known manuscripts of any part of the Bible, older even than the Pentateuch manuscript of the British Museum (Oriental 4445), described as dating “probably” from the ninth century. On one Biblical fragment I found some gilt letters. Gold ink was well known to the Jews of antiquity. Some scholars even claim it as an invention of the People of the Book. But its use in the writing of the Scriptures was early forbidden by the Rabbis. The prohibition was meant to apply only to copies intended for public reading in the synagogue. But, as a fact, all manuscripts of the Bible are singularly free from such “ornamental aids.” The fragment in question forms a rare exception, and must, therefore, date from an age when simplicity and uniformity in the materials used for writing the Bible had not yet become the rule.

Of great rarity, again, are the fragments in which all the words (except those at the beginning of the verses) are represented by a peculiar system of initials only, as, for instance, “In the beginning G. c. the h. a. the e.” (Gen. 1: 1). That such abbreviations should be employed even in copies of Holy Writ was only natural in an age when the chisel and the pen were the only means of making thought visible. On the strength of the few abbreviations they met with in Bible manuscripts, Ken-

nicott and other scholars tried to account for certain misreadings of the Septuagint. Take your Webster's Dictionary, and look up how many hundreds of words begin, for instance, with the letter *B*, and think, on the other hand, that in the sentence before you there is room for one *B*-headed word only, and you will form some idea what a dangerous pitfall lay in every initial for the Greek translator, or even for the Jewish scribe. The Genizah has for the first time supplied us with samples proving that the abbreviation system was not limited to certain isolated words, but extended to the whole contents of the Bible. The particular system represented in the Genizah seems to have been known to the old Rabbis under the name of Trellis-writing. Dr. Felix Perles, from his acquaintance with the few specimens acquired by the Bodleian Library, at once recognised their significance for the verbal criticism of the Bible, and made them the subject of some apt remarks in a recent essay (*Analekten zur Textkritik*, etc., Munich, 1895). The Cambridge collections include such examples in far greater number, and many more may still be found. They will probably be edited in a volume by themselves, and will, I have no doubt, after careful study throw fresh light on many an obscure passage in the different versions.

While the Trellis-written Bible was undoubtedly intended for the use of the grown-up scholar, in whose case a fair acquaintance with the sacred volume could be assumed, we have another species of Bibli-

cal fragments, representing the "Reader without Tears" of the Old World. They are written in large, distinct letters, and contain, as a rule, the first verses of the Book of Leviticus, accompanied or preceded by various combinations of the letters of the alphabet, which the child had to practise upon. The modern educationalist, with his low notions of the "priestly legislation,"—harsh, unsympathetic words, indeed—would probably regard this part of the Scriptures as the last thing in the world fit to be put into the hands of children. We must not forget, however, that the Jew of ancient times was not given to analysis. Seizing upon its bold features, he saw in the Book of Leviticus only the good message of God's reconciliation with man, by means of sacrifice and of purity in soul and body. Perceiving, on the other hand, in every babe the budding minister "without taint of sin and falsehood," the Rabbi could certainly render no higher homage to childhood than when he said, "Let the pure come and busy themselves with purity." Every school thus assumed in his eyes the aspect of a holy temple, in which the child by his reading performed the service of an officiating priest.

Sometimes it is the fragments forming the conclusions of books, or, more correctly, of whole groups of books, such as the end of the Pentateuch, the end of the Prophets, and the end of the Hagiographa, that yield us important information; for in some cases they possess appendixes or colophons that give the date of the manuscript, as well as the name of the

owner and of the scribe. Occasionally we come upon a good scolding, as when the colophon runs: "This Pentateuch [or Psalter] was dedicated by N. N., in the year —, to the synagogue —. It shall not be sold, it shall not be removed, it shall not be pawned; cursed be he who sells it, cursed be he who removes it," etc. So far "the pious founder." It is rather disconcerting to read these curses when you happen to know something about the person who removed the manuscript, but you have to make the best of such kind wishes if you want to get at its history. Perhaps my researches may, after all, prove helpful to the feeble efforts made by the pious donor to achieve immortality, inasmuch as his name will again be given to the world in the catalogue which will one day be prepared. His chances in the dust-heap of the Genizah were certainly much poorer.

The foregoing remarks will suffice to show that even the Biblical fragments, though naturally adding to our knowledge little that is fresh in matter, are not without their points of interest, and must by no means be lightly esteemed. But this is not all. Ancient manuscripts are not to be judged by mere outward appearances; they have depths and under-currents of their own. And, after you have taken in the text, marginal notes, versions, curses, and all, there flashes upon you, from between the lines or the words, a faint yellow mark differently shaped from those in the rest of the fragment, and you discover that it is a palimpsest you have in hand. Your purely Hebrew

studies are then at an end, and you find yourself drifting suddenly into Greek, Palestinian Syriac, Coptic, or Georgian, as the case may be. Only in two cases have the palimpsests turned out to be Hebrew upon Hebrew. A new examination then begins, and to this you have to apply yourself the more strenuously as the under writing is usually of more importance than the later surface writing.

This has proved to be especially the case with the liturgical fragments, among which the earliest, and perhaps the most important, palimpsests have been found. Personally, I am quite satisfied with their appearance. If they restore to us the older forms of the "original prayers," as some of them indeed do, they need, of course, no further *raison d'être* for the Jewish student, this being the only means of supplying us with that history of our ancient liturgy which is still a *desideratum*. But even if they represent only some hymn of the later Psalmists of the synagogue (*Paitanim*), I am not, on closer acquaintance, particularly anxious to see them improved upon. One likes to think of the old days when devotion was not yet procurable ready-made from hymn-books run by theological syndicates; and many a fragment in the Genizah headed "In thy name, Merciful One," and followed by some artless religious lyric or simple prayer, is full of suggestion regarding by-gone times. You can see by their abruptness and their unfinished state that they were not the product of elaborate literary art, but were penned down in the excitement of the

moment, in a "fit of love," so to speak, to express the religious aspirations of the writer. Their metre may be faulty, their diction crude, and their grammar questionable, but love letters are not, as a rule, distinguished by perfection of style. They are sublime stammering at best, though they are intelligible enough to two souls absorbed in each other. I am particularly fond of looking at the remnants of a Piyutim collection, written on papyrus leaves, with their rough edges and very ancient writing. In turning those leaves, with which time has dealt so harshly, one almost imagines one sees again the "gods ascending out of the earth," transporting us, as they do, to the Kaliric period, and perhaps even earlier, when synagogues were set on fire by the angels who came to listen to the service of the holy singers, and mortals stormed Heaven with their prayers. How one would like to catch a glimpse of that early hymnologist to whom we owe the well-known Piyut, ויאתי, which, in its iconoclastic victory of monotheism over all kinds of idolatries, ancient as well as modern, might be best described as the Marseillaise of the people of the Lord of Hosts—a Marseillaise which is not followed by a Reign of Terror, but by the Kingdom of God on earth, when the upright shall exult, and the saints triumphantly rejoice.

These are, however, merely my personal sentiments. The majority of students would look rather askance upon the contents of the Sabbatical hymn under which the remains of Aquila were buried for

nearly nine centuries. The story of Aquila, or Akylas, the name under which he passes in Rabbinic literature, is not a very familiar one to the public, and it offers so many points of interest that it is worth dwelling upon it for a while. He flourished in the first decades of the second century of the Christian Era, was a Græco-Roman by birth, and was brought up in the pagan religion of his native place, Sinope, a town in the Pontos, in Asia Minor, which acquired fresh fame as the opening scene of the Crimean War. Both Jewish and Christian legends report him to have been a kinsman of the Emperor Hadrian, but there is no historical evidence for it. It is, however, not unlikely that he had some relation with the court, as we know that Hadrian entrusted him with the restoration of Jerusalem, which he was planning at that time. Of his father we know only that he was well-off and a good orthodox heathen ; for it is recorded that Aquila, who was already professing Judaism when his father died, had great difficulties with his share in the inheritance, which included idols. In accordance with his interpretation of the Jewish law (Deut. 13 : 17), he refused to derive any profit from them, even indirectly, and threw their equivalent in money into the Dead Sea. His early training must have been that of the regular Greek gentleman, sufficiently known from Plutarch's Lives. According to one report he began life as priest in the pagan temple of his native place, in which, considering his high connexions, he probably held some rich benefice.

According to some writers Christianity formed the intermediary stage by which Aquila passed from paganism to Judaism. This would be a very natural process. But the matter, as represented by some Fathers of the Church, is not very flattering to Judaism. Their story is somewhat as follows: Aquila, abiding in Jerusalem, by the order of the Emperor, and seeing there the disciples of the Apostles flourishing in the faith, and doing great signs in healing and other wonders, became so deeply impressed therewith that he soon embraced the Christian faith. After some time he claimed the "seal in Christ," and obtained it. But he did not turn away from his former habit of believing,—to wit, in vain astronomy, of which he was an expert,—but would be casting the horoscope of his nativity every day, wherefore he was re-proved and upbraided by the disciples. However, he would not mend, but would obstinately oppose to them false and incoherent arguments, such as fate and matters therewith connected; so he was expelled from the Church as one unfit for salvation. Sorely vexed at being dishonoured in this way, his mind was goaded by wanton pride, and he abjured Christianity and Christian life, became a Jewish proselyte, and was circumcised.

The best historians, however, give preference to the Jewish account, which tells us nothing about Aquila's Christian days. In this he figures as Akylas the proselyte, the disciple of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua. With the former he is said to have had a rather bad

encounter. Perusing the passage in the Scripture, "For the Lord your God . . . he does execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger (*Ger*) in giving him food and raiment" (Deut. 10 : 17-18), Aquila exclaimed: "So, that is all which God has in store for the *Ger*? How many pheasants and peacocks have I which even my slaves refuse to taste" (so satiated are they with delicacies)? To be sure, modest wants and frugal habits are no great recommendation for a religion. At least, it cannot under such circumstances aspire to the dignity of the church of a gentleman. R. Eliezer resented this worldliness in his pupil, and rebuked him with the words: "Dost thou, *Ger*, speak so slightingly of the things for which the patriarch (Jacob) prayed so fervently?" (Gen. 33 : 20). This harshness of R. Eliezer, we are told, nearly led to a relapse of the proselyte. He found, however, a more patient listener in the meek and gentle R. Joshua, who by his sympathetic answer reconciled him to his new faith.

The work which brought Aquila's name to posterity is his Greek version of the Old Testament, which he undertook because he found the text of the Septuagint greatly disfigured, both by wilful interpolations and by blundering ignorance. It was prepared under the direction of the two Rabbis just mentioned (R. Eliezer and R. Joshua) and their fellow-disciple R. Akiba. The main feature of Aquila's version is an exaggerated literalism, which, as one may imagine, often does violence to the Greek. It is

such awkward Greek that, as somebody has said, it is almost good Hebrew. The alternative which lay before Aquila was, as it seems, between awkward Greek and bad and false renderings, and he decided for the former. One of the Church Fathers, when alluding to this version, says: "Thereupon (after his conversion to Judaism) he devoted himself most assiduously to the study of the Hebrew tongue and the elements thereof, and, when he had completely mastered the same, he set to interpreting (the Scriptures), not of honest purpose, but in order to pervert certain sayings of Scriptures, hurling his attacks against the version of the seventy-two interpreters, with a view to giving a different rendering to those things which are testified of Christ in the Scriptures."

Now, so far as one can judge from the little retained to us of his version, Aquila's perverting activity did not go much farther than that which engaged the Revision Committee for many years, who also gave different renderings, at least in the margin, to the so-called Christological passages. It is true that Jews preferred his version to the Septuagint, which at that time became the playground of theologians, who deduced from it all sorts of possible and impossible doctrines, not only by means of interpretation, but also by actual meddling with the text. One has only to read with some attention the Pauline Epistles to see with what excessive freedom Scriptural texts were handled when the severest rules of exegesis were abandoned. Some modern divines even exalt

these misquotations and wrong translations as the highest goal of Christian liberty, which is above such paltry, slavish considerations as exactness and accuracy. Aquila's version may thus have interfered with theological liberty. But there is no real evidence that he entered upon his work in a controversial spirit. His undertaking was probably actuated by purely scholarly motives. As a fact, the most learned of the Church Fathers (*e. g.* St. Jerome) praise it often as a thorough and exact piece of work. As to the Rabbis, tradition records, that when Aquila put his version before his Jewish masters, they were so delighted with it that they applied to it the verse in Psalms: "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured in thy lips (45: 3)." The Rabbis were, indeed, not entirely insensible to the grace of the Greek language, and they interpreted the verse in Genesis 9: 27, to mean that the beauty of Japheth (the type of Greece), which is so much displayed in his language, shall, by the fact that the Torah will be rendered into the Greek tongue, find access to the tents (or synagogues) of Shem (represented by Israel.) In the case of Aquila, however, the grace admired in his version was, one must assume, the grace of truth. To the grace of an elegant style and fluent diction, as we have seen, it can lay no claim.

For most of our knowledge of Aquila we are indebted to Origen. We know his amiable weakness for universal salvation. He thought not even the devil beyond the possibility of repentance. Accord-

ingly, he saved the "Jewish proselyte" from oblivion by inserting several of his renderings in his famous *Hexapla*, which, however, has come down to us in a wrecked and fragmentary state. The Aquila fragments discovered in the Genizah represent, in some cases, Piyutim, in others, the Talmud of Jerusalem, and the Greek under them is written in uncials, stated by specialists to date from the beginning of the sixth century. They are the first continuous pieces coming, not through the medium of quotations, but directly from Aquila's work, and must once have formed a portion of a Bible used in some Hellenistic Jewish synagogue for the purpose of public reading. The Tetragrammaton is neither translated nor transcribed, but written in the archaic Hebrew characters found in the Siloam inscription. Considering that Aquila's version is so literal that the original is always transparently visible through it, these fragments will prove an important contribution to our knowledge of the state of the Hebrew text during the first centuries of our era, and of the mode of its interpretation. A part of these fragments have been already edited in various publications, by Dr C. Taylor, the Master of St. John's College, and Mr. Burkitt, the fortunate discoverer of the first Aquila leaf. But more leaves have since come to light, which will be edited in course of time.

To return to the liturgical fragments found in the Genizah. Under this head may be included the didactic poetry of the synagogue. It is a peculiar mix-

ture of devotional passages and short epigrammatic sentences, representing, to a certain extent, the Wisdom literature of the Synagogue in the Middle Ages. Sometimes they are written, not unlike the Book of Proverbs in the old Bible manuscripts, in two columns, each column giving a hemistich. The examination of this class of fragments requires great caution and close attention, not so much on account of their own merits as because of their strong resemblance to Ecclesiasticus both in form and in matter. You dare not neglect the former lest some piece of the latter escape you. The identification of the Ecclesiasticus fragments is, indeed, a very arduous task, since our knowledge of this apocryphon has been till now attainable only through its Greek or Syriac disguise, which amounts sometimes to a mere defaced caricature of the real work of Sirach. But I hardly need to point out that the recovery of even the smallest scrap of the original Hebrew compensates richly for all the labor spent on it. Apart from its semi-sacred character, these Sirach discoveries restore to us the only genuine document dating from the Persian-Greek period (from about 450 till about 160 B. C. E.), the most obscure in the whole of Jewish history. And I am strongly convinced that with all his "Jewish prejudices" he will prove a safer guide in this labyrinth of guesses and counter-guesses than the liberal-minded "backward prophet" of the Nineteenth Century, whose source of inspiration is not always above doubt.³ I am happy to state that my labours in this

department were rewarded with several discoveries of fragments from Sirach's "Wisdom Book." They will soon be submitted to the necessary study preceding their preparation for the press, when they will appear in a separate volume.

The Rabbinic productions of the earlier sages, teachers, and interpreters, as they are embodied in the Mishnah, the Additions, and the Talmud of Jerusalem and the Talmud of Babylon, formed the main subjects of study in the mediæval schools of the Jews. It is thus only natural that the Genizah should yield a large number of fragments of the works mentioned, and they do, indeed, amount to many hundreds. Some of these are provided with vowel-points, and occasionally also with accents, and thus represent a family of manuscripts hitherto known only through the evidence of certain authorities testifying to the fact that there existed copies of early Rabbinic works prepared in the way indicated. But what the student is especially looking out for is for remainders of the Talmud of Jerusalem, which, though in some respects more important for the knowledge of Jewish history and the intelligent conception of the minds of the Rabbis than the "twin-Talmud of the East," has been, by certain untoward circumstances, badly neglected in the schools, and thus very little copied by the scribes. Its real importance and superiority above similar contemporary productions was only recognised in the comparatively modern centuries, when the manuscripts, as just indicated never

very ample, had long disappeared. The Genizah opens a new mine in this direction, too, and the number of fragments of the Jerusalem Talmud increasing daily, also amounting to a goodly volume, will doubtless be published by some student in due time.

Where the Genizah promises the largest output is in the department of history, especially the period intervening between the birth of Saadya (892) and the death of Maimonides (1205). This period, which gave birth to the greatest of the Eminences (Gaonim), Rabbi Saadya, Rabbi Sherira, and Rabbi Hai, which witnessed the hottest controversies between the Rabbinites and the Karaites and other schismatics, and which saw the disintegration of the great old schools in Babylon, and the creation of new centres for the study of the Torah in Europe and in Northern Africa, forms, as is well known, one of the most important chapters in Jewish history. But this chapter will now have to be re-written; any number of conveyances, leases, bills, and private letters are constantly turning up, thus affording us a better insight into the social life of the Jews during those remote centuries. New letters from the Eminences addressed to their contemporaries, scattered over various countries, are daily coming to light, and will form an important addition to the Responsa literature of the Gaonim. Even entire new books or fragments of such, composed by the Gaonim, and only known by references have been discovered. Of more significance are such documents

as those bearing on the controversy between Rabbi Saadya and his contemporary Ben Meïr, the head of the Jews in Palestine, which prove that even at that time the question of authority over the whole of Jewry, and of the prerogative of fixing the calendar, was still a contested point between the Jews of Palestine and their brethren in the dispersion. The controversy was a bitter one and of long duration, as may be seen from another document dating from the Eleventh Century, the Scroll of Abiathar, which, at the same time, reveals the significant fact that the antagonism between the Priestly and the Kingly, or the Aaronide and Davidic families, had not quite died down even at this late period. Some of the documents are autograph. It is enough to mention here the letter of Chushiel ben Elhanan (or Hananel) of Kairowan, addressed to Shemariah ben Elhanan of Egypt, written about the year 1000. To these two Rabbis, legend attributes a large share in the transplanting of the Torah in Northern Africa, so that our document will prove an important contribution to the history of the rise of the Yeshiboth outside of Babylon.

Looking over this enormous mass of fragments about me, in the sifting and examination of which I am now occupied, I cannot overcome a sad feeling stealing over me, that I shall hardly be worthy to see all the results which the Genizah will add to our knowledge of Jews and Judaism. The work is not for one man

and not for one generation. It will occupy many a specialist, and much longer than a lifetime. However, to use an old adage, "It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it."

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE¹

There is a saying of an old Hebrew sage, "In a place where one is unknown, one is permitted to say, I am a scholar." Now I am, I fear, neither so humble as to think myself quite a *persona ignota*, nor am I, I trust, so arrogant as to claim, in the presence of so learned an audience, a title to deserve which I have still to do my life's work. But being about to express opinions not quite in harmony with current views, I shall avail myself of this license so far as to say what I am not: I am no partisan, I hold no brief for a particular school, and I have no cause to defend. Such a declaration, which would be entirely out of place in any other branch of human knowledge, is unfortunately still necessary in view of the particular nature of the subject which, by the courtesy of the Council and the Senate of the college, it will be my privilege to expound. My subject is the Hebrew language; and the means of acquiring it are the same as make for proficiency in any other language—sound knowledge of its grammar, wide acquaintance with its vocabulary, and, above all, real familiarity with its literature; for it is in the literature that the spirit still surviveth, even in the so-called dead languages. But the literature by which the Hebrew language is represented is a *sacred* literature; a literature which by common consent of the civilised world

bears the name of a Testament. As such, every line in it claims to bear testimony to some eternal truth, to convey some moral lesson, and reveal some awful mystery. The very first text (Genesis) on which I shall have to lecture gives us an account of the Creation, whilst the verse, "And God created man in his own image," has kept busy pulpit and brush for nearly twenty centuries, and another twenty centuries may pass before humanity gets into possession of its sacred and secret *dossier*. However, this is the province of the artist and the preacher. But even in the region of mere exegesis we are confronted with two important theological schools—I say advisedly, theological schools.

For, in spite of all professions of impartiality and freedom from prejudice, each school has its own theological standpoint which greatly affects even its etymology. To give one instance: According to Wellhausen, the word Torah (תורה) meant originally the thing thrown or cast, a term borrowed from the lots or stones cast by the priests for the purpose of deciding difficult cases. On the other hand, the pure philologist Barth derives it in his *Etymologische Studien* from a root still extant in Arabic, denoting "the thing reported," or "come down by tradition," and proceeds to say, "Thus Wellhausen's hypothesis is not confirmed."² But Wellhausen's hypothesis is somehow strangely in harmony with Wellhausen's conception of the law, which thus would originate in a sort of priestly fetich.

However, this is a minor point. More serious is the question as to the dates at which the various books and documents of which the Old Testament is made up, were composed. When I speak of the old school, I do not refer to the class of commentators represented by Doctor Pusey in England and Professor Hengstenberg in Germany. I am rather thinking of the school led by Ewald, Bleek, Dillmann, Strack, Kittel, and many other men of prominence, none of whom could be suspected of being blind followers of tradition. They all accepted the heterogeneous composition of the Pentateuch, and cheerfully took part in the difficult task of its proper analysis. In fact, few scholars have contributed more toward this analysis than Dillmann. And even a superficial acquaintance with their works shows that not a single tradition was allowed by them to stand, in which anything that might be construed as an anachronism could be detected. When we consider that this school has furnished us with grammarians, lexicographers, and general Semitic scholars at least as eminent as those of the new school, we shall at once perceive that the arguments for settling the dates of the various documents cannot possibly have been evolved on merely philological lines. Theological considerations as to the nature of inspiration and the real functions of religion, metaphysical speculations as to the meaning and the laws of progression and development in history, and, above all, the question as to the compatibility of a real living faith with a

hearty devotion to the ceremonial law, play at least an equal part therein. To a certain extent it was the supposed antagonism between religion as a social institution, and religion as a matter personal and inward, which, on the one hand, turned post-exilic Judaism into a sort of "revival camp" with the whole of the community on the mourners' bench, and, on the other hand, converted the greatest collection of religious lyrics into a mere hymn-book, reflecting, not the aspirations and longings of the individual, but the corporate utterances of the community.

Having to lecture on these sacred documents, I may perhaps be expected to take part in this controversy. In fact, I have already been asked the old question, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" I will, therefore, declare beforehand that, far from being the mouthpiece of a single school, I shall, when necessary, try to do justice to both, so far as I understand them. At the same time, however, I shall beg leave to maintain a sceptical attitude toward both schools, which will enable me to preserve my freedom of judgment. I say, when necessary, for, as a rule, literary criticism will be my province, and I shall not easily be drawn into the discussion of questions in the settling of which theology and metaphysics occupy a more prominent part than philology and exegesis.

In adopting this course, I am guided by the following reasons: First, as I understand, the traditions of the University College of London have always tended

to exclude all controversial matter which cannot well be discussed without a certain theological bias. The fact that we now conjure with the names of the neo-Platonist Schleiermacher and the Hegelian Watke, instead of appealing to the authority of Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, has by no means cooled down our theological temperature. As in days of old, theological controversies are still wanting in "sweet reasonableness," and should, therefore, receive no encouragement from a teacher.

Another reason for reducing these discussions to a minimum is economy. The old saying, "Art is long, and Life is short," is to no subject more applicable than to the study of Hebrew. It is a strange world, both in language and in thought, quite bewildering for the beginner. It has practically no vowel-system; at least, not one which is perceivable to the European eye. The tiny little signs above and below the line proved a stumbling-block to a Goethe, and he gave up the study of Hebrew in despair. Yet how much depends on correct vocalisation. To give an example of a somewhat general character, I will only mention here two combinations of the letters *Yod*, *Zadi*, and *Resh*. Read *Yoser*, it means "he who forms, who fashions, who creates," hence "creator." Read *Yczer*, it denotes "frame, formation, imagination, desire, evil desire," developing gradually, in the later Hebrew literature, into the mysterious, unspeakable angel we know so well from Milton's "Paradise Lost." Hence the exclamation of a Rabbi in referring to the

great dualism of flesh and spirit under which man is constantly labouring: "Woe unto me of my *Yezzer*, and woe unto me of my *Yozzer*."³ On the other hand, the normal span of our academic life extends over the short period of nine terms, some eighteen months in all. Considering now how little preparation the student receives for this branch of study in the schools leading up to the University, it is evident that there is no time to spare for discussions lying beyond the sphere of grammar and literary criticism. The temptation to indulge in theology and metaphysical reconstructions of history is very great, indeed, but it must be resisted at this stage of the student's new life.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that in the majority of cases the student of Hebrew is less intent upon acquiring the knowledge of a Semitic language than upon gaining a fair acquaintance with the contents of the sacred volume. But I am inclined to think that even with this purpose in view I shall be more helpful to the student by lecturing *on* the Bible than by lecturing *about* the Bible. For the great fact remains that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. I remember to have read somewhere that the best commentary on the Sermon on the Mount is Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam." This is, I am afraid, a pompous platitude. But I think that every student will agree with me that, for instance, the best exposition of the "Priestly Code" is to be found in Ezekiel, that the most lucid interpretation of Isaiah is to be sought in certain portions of the Psalms, and that,

if we were to look for an illustration of the ideals of the Book of Deuteronomy, we could do no better than study the Books of Chronicles and certain groups of the Psalms. To use a quaint old expression applied to Scripture: "Turn it and turn it over again, for the All is therein," both its criticism and its history. Introductions to the Old Testament, Lives and Times of the various prophets, and histories of the Canon, are excellent things in their own way; but unless we are prepared to exchange the older blind faith for the newer parrot-like repetitions of obscure critical terms, they should not be read, and, indeed, cannot be read with profit, before we have made ourselves masters of the twenty-four books of the Old Testament in the original.

This, I should think, is an obvious truth, nay, a truism. Still, I am glad to have the opportunity to utter it for once. The dread of partiality for the Massoretic text is so great in certain circles that the notion seems to gain ground that the best qualification for writing on the Old Testament is ignorance of Hebrew. Thus we are brought face to face with the multitude of books, essays, and articles on Biblical subjects by authors who freely confess, if not boast of, the fact that they know the Old Testament only through the medium of versions, but still insist on their ability to judge upon the gravest questions of dates and authorship. Translations, some author has remarked, are the structures with which a kind Providence has overbridged the deeps of human thought caused by the division of tongues at the Tower of Babel. The re-

mark is as humble in spirit as it is prudent in practice. It is certainly safer to walk over the bridge than to swim the flood. But in this case we must be satisfied not to express opinions about the nature of the river, its various currents and under-currents, its depths and shallows, and the original formation of its bed. To form a judgment on these and similar points, one must learn to swim and dive, nay, one must immerse himself in the very element against whose touch the bridge was meant to protect him. To use a New Testament proverb, "Wisdom is justified of her children," or, as the Rabbis would have put it, "the sons of the Torah." But the first duty which the loyal son performs toward his mother, is to make her language his own, so that he may dispense with interpreter and dictionary, and patiently listen to her tale from her own lips, told in her own way. She may not be always inclined toward humiliating confessions; but a single gesture, a single turn of phrase, a sudden stammering where flow of speech is expected, and a certain awkwardness of expression, will at once reveal the critical points in her story. To learn her story through the medium of versions and introductions, means at best to rely on neighbourly gossip, which, however interesting and friendly, is never free from exaggerations and conventional phrases. It is only the knowledge of the original mother-story which enables us to detect the elements of truth this gossip may contain.

I will, however, confess that it was neither mere deference to the liberal traditions of this learned Soci-

ety, nor even considerations of economy, which were decisive with me in adopting the course I have just pointed out. These reasons are weighty enough, but they would hardly justify me in assuming the sceptical position I intend to maintain. In fact, nothing is more distressing to my mind than that mental squinting which finds permanent doubt the only point on which it can rest. The force of circumstances is, however, too strong for me. For I am convinced that, at present at least, there is little positive truth to state on the great questions at issue between the various schools of Bible criticism.

That tradition cannot be maintained in all its statements need not be denied. The Second Isaiah, for instance, is a fact; not less a fact is it that Solomon cannot be held responsible for the scepticism of the Book of Ecclesiastes, nor can David claim the authorship of the whole of the Psalms for himself. The question at present, however, is not as it was with the older schools, whether tradition was not possibly mistaken in this or that respect, but whether it contains elements of truth at all. For instance, had Moses, if ever there existed such a person, any connexion with that series of books known as "the Torah of Moses?" The existence of King David is still unchallenged, but did he write or, considering the peculiar religious circumstances of the age, could he, or even his contemporaries and successors for the next four centuries, have written a single hymn of the collection which tradition attributes to him? The

answers given by the modern school to these and similar questions are mostly in the negative. But it may be doubted whether its reconstruction of the history of Israel, as well as its re-arrangement of the documents included in the Canon of the Old Testament have obtained that degree of certainty which would justify a teacher in communicating them to his pupils without constantly accompanying his remarks by a note of interrogation.

In questioning the results of this school, I may premise that I am in no way opposed to criticism. Criticism is nothing more than the expression of conscience on the part of the student, and we can as little dispense with it in literature as with common honesty in our dealings with our fellow-men. Nor, I trust, have I ever given way to anybody in my respect for most of the leaders of the various schools of Bible criticism, Lower as well as Higher. The attempt at an analysis of the Bible into component elements, whether one agrees with its results or assumes a sceptical attitude towards them, is one of the finest intellectual feats of this century; though a good deal of brutal vivisection is daily done by restless spirits whose sole ambition is to outdo their masters. This, however, is not the fault of the masters. No student can read a page of Kuenen's *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung*, to the Old Testament, without doing homage to his genius as a critic and admiring his patient research and single-hearted devotion to what he considered to be the truth. But, as some-

body has remarked, if tradition is not infallible, neither are any of its critics.

The difficulties presenting themselves on both sides may perhaps be summed up thus: Whilst Tradition knows too much of the earlier and earliest history of Israel, our modern schools are too prolific of their information as to the later history of Israel, that is, the greater part of what is known as the Persian-Greek period. You will at once realise this peculiar distribution of knowledge and ignorance, if you compare two chronological tables, the one appended to a Bible which appeared in 1866, and the other incorporated in the second volume of Kautzsch's *Die heilige Schrift*, published in 1894. The former is most complete in its record of events said to have taken place before 1088 B. C. E., and is almost one large blank after 450 B. C. E. In the latter the very opposite is the case, the blank being transferred to the first thousand years of Israel's history, whilst the Persian-Greek period teems with historical events and, in particular, with the chronology of the composition of various canonical writings. In the Rabbinic literature, as is well known, the whole duration of the Persian empire as contemporary with the Second Temple shrank to some fifty-two years. This, as I hardly need say, is questionable chronology. But it is wise scepticism worthy of recommendation, implying, as it does, a confession of ignorance about a period of which we know so little.

Modern learning has thus, with its characteristic *horror vacui*, peopled these very centuries with

lawgivers, prophets, psalmists, and apocalypse writers; but every student will, I think, readily admit that there is still many an obscure point to be cleared up. For instance, the exact number of the Maccabæan Psalms, which is constantly shifting; the exact date of the composition of the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is still a mere guess; the causes leading to the conclusion of the so-called second canon; the precise nature of the work of creating new canons and some clear definition of the authority of the men who presumed to execute this delicate task. Again, most of the theories advanced as to the date and the authorship of the group of Psalms assigned to the third century, of the Song of Songs, and of the Book of Ruth, are, to use a Talmudic expression, "mountains suspended on a hair," and are in no way better than those they are meant to replace. Altogether, the period looks to me rather over-populated, and I begin to get anxious about the accommodations of the Synagogue, or, rather, the "House of Interpretation" (*Beth ha-Midrash*), which was not a mere *Bamah*, but a thing of moment in the religious life of those times. In its service were enlisted whole assemblies of men, whom neither the *aperçus* of a Wellhausen, nor the really learned researches of a Kuenen, can argue out of existence, and whose humble activity consisted in interpreting the law, raising up many disciples, and making "fences" round the Torah. But there is scarcely breathing-space left for such men as these in an ambitious age that was absolutely bent on smuggling its own productions into the Scriptures.

Now, neither hypothesis of the rise of the Canon—that given by tradition and that afforded by the new school—is quite free from difficulties and improbable assumptions. I cannot here enter into details, and must refer you to Kittel's "Introduction," which seems to me to be a fair exposition of the question on both sides. But I may be allowed to make one general remark, and that is, that there is no period in Jewish history which is so entirely obscure as the period extending from about 450 to 150 B. C. E. All that is left us from those ages are a few meagre notices by Josephus, which do not seem to be above doubt, and a few bare names in the Books of Chronicles of persons who hardly left any mark on the history of the times. One gets rather suspicious of a hypothesis with powers of vision which seem to grow in proportion to the increasing darkness surrounding an age. More light is wanted.

This light promises now to come from the discoveries made within the last few years. I am referring to the discovery of the original Hebrew of the apocryphal work, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira," or, as it is commonly called, "Ecclesiasticus," in contradistinction to Ecclesiastes.

There is no need to enlarge on the importance of this work for the Biblical student. It is sufficient to remind you of two facts: first, that it is the only Jewish literary production that has come down to us from those "dark ages" which can boast of something like a date. As you can see in the various Introduc-

tions to the Apocrypha, scholars are not quite unanimous as to this date. But it is certain that it cannot be placed before about 280 B. C. E., nor much later than 200 B. C. E. The second fact which I wish to recall to your minds is that the modern school has placed the greatest part of the *Kethubin*, or the Hagiographa, at just about those dates. A great part, again, of the Psalms has been placed after those dates, namely, in the Maccabæan age. The Wisdom of Ben Sira was written in Hebrew, and would thus have furnished us with an excellent test of the mode of thinking as well as of the language and style of the period in question. But the original unfortunately disappeared for many centuries. To my knowledge, Samuel David Luzzatto was the first to enlist the Wisdom of Ben Sira in the service of Bible criticism. Judging from the few quotations from Ben Sira given in the Talmud, he was led to the belief that this apocryphal work was written in New-Hebrew, the dialect in which the Mishnah and cognate Rabbinic works were compiled. This being the stage of the language about 200 B. C. E., it follows that the Maccabæan age could not have produced Psalms composed in the best classical style of an earlier age. Even more cogent was the argument of Professor Ehrt, who undertook to prove that Ben Sira had made use of Psalms supposed by the modern school to date from the Maccabæan age. He was silenced by the strange answer that his evidence had to be sifted. Perhaps what was meant was, that only the original of a work could enable us to see how far and how much the

author copied from other works. But the original was then considered as lost for ever. The last Christian who made mention of it was St. Jerome in the fourth century. One of the last Jews who stated that he had seen it was the Gaon R. Saadya, who died in 942. The unexpected, however, came to pass on May 13, 1896, when it was my good fortune to discover, among the Hebrew and Arabic fragments which Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson acquired on their travels through the East, a leaf of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus. Subsequently more discoveries suggested by my description of the discovered leaf were made, in Oxford, in Cambridge, and elsewhere. Of the Lewis-Gibson Fragment, together with the fragments deposited now in the Bodleian Library, there exist at present six editions: one by English scholars, two by German professors, two more by French *savants*, and one by a Russian student. The *editio princeps* of the first find was published in the July number of "The Expositor," in 1896. Of the Cambridge Fragments, covering a much larger ground than the fragments already made known, one leaf only was edited in "The Jewish Quarterly Review" of January, 1898, under the heading of "Genizah Specimens." The remaining leaves will shortly be published by the University Press of Cambridge.⁴

These discoveries when put together restore to us about twenty-five chapters of the original Hebrew of the Wisdom of Ben Sira, or about half of the whole book, consisting of fifty-one chapters. We are thus

in a position now to form a fair judgment of the state of the Hebrew language about 200 B. C. E., or, it may be, 280 B. C. E., as well as of the standard of authorship in that age. I am bound to say that this judgment is not flattering to our omniscience. I say it with a certain amount of regret, as for a goodly number of years I was an ardent believer in the possibility of Maccabæan Psalms, an hypothesis on which I built great hopes. This is a great disappointment to me. Alas, there is no insurance office in which students can insure theories against the dangers resulting from unexpected discoveries and fresh excavations. I must reluctantly submit to a "total loss" of my hypothesis.

As regards the Ben Sira discoveries, to begin with a concrete example, I will mention the case of the Book of Job. The theories regarding the age in which this book was composed range at present from about 1320 to about 200 B. C. E. With that singular capacity for blundering which distinguishes the Greek translators, the name of Job was omitted from the list of the heroes of Israel's past whom Ben Sira praises in his *Hymnus Patrum*, and some bolder spirits consequently felt themselves at liberty to make the writer of Job nearly a contemporary of Ben Sira. The restored original Hebrew proves that the Greek translator mistook *Iyob*, the name of the hero of the Book of Job, for *Oyeb*, meaning *enemy*. The Greek runs thus: "For, verily, he remembered the enemies in the storm," whilst the Hebrew reads, "Also he made mention of Job," a point to which several scholars, among

them Joseph Halévy, have drawn the attention of students. But Ben Sira knew more; he was, in fact, thoroughly familiar with the contents of the Book of Job. His whole cosmography is based on the last chapters of the Book of Job, from which he copied various passages.

As to the language and the style of Ben Sira, it is true that certain portions of the book, especially the just mentioned *Hymnus Patrum*, are written mostly in classical Hebrew. A careful analysis, however, will show that they are at best nothing more than a series of quotations from the canonical writings, joining verse to verse and phrase to phrase, all alike copied from the Bible. In other words Ben Sira was, like so many post-Biblical writers, an imitator of the Old Testament both in form and in matter; his model for the former being the whole of the Old Testament, whilst the matter is, as far as the gnomic part is concerned, generally borrowed from the Book of Proverbs.

But like all imitators he was not always on his guard, and, in careless moments, terms, expressions, and idioms escaped him which make it sufficiently clear that in his time the New-Hebrew dialect, both in respect of grammar and of phraseology, had reached its highest development. What is even more to our present purpose, is the fact, rendered certain by the original Hebrew, that Ben Sira was acquainted with the Psalter in all its parts, those ascribed to the Persian period as well as those ascribed to the Maccabæan and post-Maccabæan ages. He copies freely

from them, in some cases he borrows whole verses, though, quite in the fashion of the Rabbis, he is rather too liberal in their application.

It would prove tedious to enter into an analysis of the Book of Ben Sira. This could not be done without giving complete lists of words, phrases, and idioms, amounting to many hundreds, but absolutely meaningless when disjoined from their context. I may, however, be permitted to reproduce a few verses from a hymn of Ben Sira which, echoing as it does the time in which it was written, lends itself best to consideration.

They are thus :

1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
2. O give thanks unto the God of praises ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
3. O give thanks unto him that is the guardian of Israel ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
4. O give thanks unto him that created all ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
5. O give thanks unto him that redeemeth Israel ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
6. O give thanks unto him that gathereth the outcasts of
Israel ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
7. O give thanks unto him that buildeth his city and his
sanctuary ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
8. O give thanks unto him that maketh a horn to bud to
the house of David ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.

9. O give thanks unto him that chose the sons of Zadok
to be priests ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
10. O give thanks unto the Shield of Abraham ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
11. O give thanks unto the Rock of Isaac ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
12. O give thanks unto the Mighty One of Jacob ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
13. O give thanks unto him that chose Zion ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
14. O give thanks unto the King of kings of kings ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
15. And also exalteth the horn for his people, a praise for
all his saints ;
Even to the children of Israel, a people near unto him.
Praise ye the Lord. (51:12¹-12⁵).

It is important to notice that the hymn is omitted in all the versions. The reason for its omission by the Greek translator can be easily found. Living at a time when the house of Zadok was already superseded by the Maccabæan line, the grandson of Ben Sira recoiled from publishing a hymn which claimed that the בני צדוק (Sons of Zadok) were specially selected for the priesthood. But it is this very prominence given to the house of Zadok which establishes its authenticity. For, after the unworthy part played by the high priests of the house of Zadok during the Hellenistic troubles, it is highly improbable that any pious Jew—as the author of this hymn evidently was—would feel so enthusiastic about this family, that their continuation in the sacred office would form the special topic of his thanksgiving to God. Such

enthusiasm could have been displayed only by one who knew the best of the Zadokides, namely Simon the Just, and who prayed so fervently for the perpetuation of God's grace upon the high priest and his children, that is, Ben Sira himself.

The model on which this hymn is formed is, as I hardly need say, Psalm 136. It is strongly reminiscent of certain passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. The last verse is directly copied from Psalm 148: 14. But though Psalm-like in form, it is liturgical in spirit. And students of the Jewish prayer-book will at once recognise its influence on the so-called Eighteen Benedictions with their introductory Blessings. The hymn is at present, I am inclined to think, in a defective state, for its model, the 136th Psalm, suggests to us that originally it consisted of twenty-six verses, of which twelve are now missing. But these might easily be supplied by the original prayers of the Synagogue, which in their turn were, as already hinted, modelled after Ben Sira. Enough, however, remains of this hymn to give us some insight into the state of religious thought in the times of Ben Sira. We learn first from it that the theocratic tendency of those ages has been unduly emphasised by modern critics. At least, it never went so far as to suppress devotion to the house of David. Even with so strong a partisan of the High Priest Simon as Ben Sira was, loyalty to the descendants of Zadok went hand in hand with the hope for the restoration of the Davidic family, in which the Mes-

sianic belief was embodied. If the first was commanded by the Torah, the second was guaranteed by the Prophets, the fulfilment of whose words is a subject of prayer for Ben Sira. To the harmony of these two beliefs, antagonistic as they may appear to the modern eye, all subsequent Jewish literature bears witness, in which the restoration of the priestly order to the service in the Temple and the advent of the Messiah ben David form so prominent a part, and are equally prayed for.

We learn further from this hymn that what occupied the mind of this latter-day psalmist was the history of his own times, not the events of the remote past. Living, as it would seem, in comparatively peaceful times, which, however, were preceded by a great crisis in the history of the nation, he gives thanks for the rebuilding of the city and the Temple and for the gathering of the outcast of Israel. What he further praises God for are the two great religious institutions of his age: the priesthood as represented by the house of Zadok, and "the house of David," which, embodying the hope of Israel in the future, passed with Ben Sira for a living reality. The invocation of the God of the Fathers, though Biblical in its origin, is at the same time a characteristic feature of the Jewish liturgy. In fact, the first of the Eighteen Benedictions is called "Fathers." The expression "King of kings of kings" shows also the marked Persian influence to which Ben Sira was as much subject as any later Rabbi who uses the

same appellation for God. We thus see clearly that what inspired Ben Sira was the present and the future of his people. To these he refers in plain language, and in the language of his time. Is it possible, I ask, that Psalms written about the same age or even later should have so little distinct reference to the events of their own time, that we have the greatest difficulty in recognising their allusions? Is it conceivable, I ask again, that Ben Sira, writing in comparatively uneventful times, should be entirely given over to the present, and yet the author of the 136th Psalm, writing as is alleged some fifty years later, should not have a single reference to the great events of his generation? Instead of making the Maccabæan victories the subject of his thanksgivings, he praises God for the Exodus from Egypt. Is it possible that Ben Sira should make the selection of the house of Zadok the theme of his thanks to God, and no Maccabæan writer should thank God in plain language for replacing it by the new dynasty? And quite apart from this new hymn, is there any adequate reason why Ben Sira, in celebrating his hero, should give us his name, Simon ben Johanan, whilst the Maccabæan heroes should be typified by Joshua, David, Solomon, Saul, and alluded to in all possible obscure ways, but never called by their right names? Again, is it possible that Ben Sira, with all his care as an imitator, and writing only two or three hymns, should forget himself so as to use an appellation of God in which the Persian influence is so manifest, whilst all the hosts of poets of the Per-

sian and the Greek period, of whom the Psalter is supposed to be the work, should succeed in divesting themselves of every trace of the influences of their times?

All these considerations added to others of not less weight, which would, however, lead us too far were I to produce them here, make it clear to me that we have been taking too many liberties with tradition. Least of all were we justified in undertaking the reconstruction of a period in Israel's history of which scarcely a single historical record was left to us. Tradition had at least at its disposal legends and myths, if you prefer to call them so. We have nothing but a series of hypotheses which, in many respects, are more improbable than those they were meant to displace. It is, therefore, only with the utmost caution, doubting doubt itself, that we can at present express any positive opinions on such obscure points.

I say, at present—for a single new discovery of a book like Ben Hagla, mentioned in the Talmud in connexion with Ben Sira, but lost to us, or a single fresh excavation in the field of Egyptology and Assyriology, may settle all these questions for us. I am thinking of another possibility. "I have," once said a sage of by-gone times, "learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, but most from my pupils." I am quite prepared to follow this wise example. And none would be more happy than I, should I succeed in forming in this place a school of Biblical students whose zeal and devotion to Semitic

studies should surpass mine, whose penetrating vision might remove all obscurities before them, so that they might disperse all doubts, allay all suspicions, and convert my cautious utterances into positive dogmatic statements.⁵

A GLIMPSE OF THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE JEWS IN THE AGE OF JESUS THE SON OF SIRACH*

My object in heading this paper "A Glimpse of the Life of the Jews in the Age of Jesus, the Son of Sirach," or, as I shall call him, Ben Sira, was to indicate at once its limits and its limitations. Thus, it will be observed that I did not circumscribe the age which will occupy our attention by any exact date, and this for the simple reason that the age in which Ben Sira lived is still a controverted point amongst students, some fixing it at 280 B. C. E., others some two generations later, about 200 B. C. E. Considering, however, that in either case Ben Sira must have belonged to a generation which had already come under the Hellenistic influence under which Asia fell by the conquests of Alexander the Great, but, on the other hand, never saw the reaction brought about against it by the Maccabæan rise, the question of precise date does not seriously affect the solution of our problem.

Of more importance is the question as to the sources which should legitimately be made use of in this study. This is a case of advanced Bible Criticism versus Tradition. If we accede to the former, Ben Sira must have lived in an age when the Psalms were still in the process of composition, when "sceptical

books" could still be smuggled into the Canon under an ancient, revered name, when certain Bedouins in some obscure corner of Arabia had just left off discussing the most solemn mysteries of our being, when Shulamith and her Beloved were about to set out on their symbolic career. The Bible, then, should furnish us with the material, particularly the Hagiographa, or *Kethubim*. If we accept Tradition as our guide, Biblical authorship would be, in the age of Ben Sira, a matter of a remote past, and we should have to turn to the pages of the Talmud for information bearing on our subject, especially to those portions of it recording the activity of the Great Synagogue (*Kencseth ha-Gedolah*) and the Ordinances of Ezra.

I have my serious doubts as to the soundness of the hypothesis of Maccabæan Psalms and similar theories that tend to fill the void in our knowledge of the period in question with shreds from the Bible.² But this scepticism by no means entirely removes our doubts in the trustworthiness of the Rabbinic records that were not reduced to writing for centuries after Ben Sira, and can thus hardly be considered as real contemporary evidence. To this description the Wisdom of Ben Sira alone can lay claim. All other works, as the Talmud, the "Chronicle of the World," and similar documents, can be regarded only as secondary sources, to be used as supplementary evidence, provided there is nothing incongruous in the nature of their statements with the times they profess to describe.

But even the use of Ben Sira is not quite free from obstacles and pitfalls. There is a passage in the "Chronicle of the World" to the effect that Elijah's occupation since his translation consists in "writing the history of all generations." I never realised the force of this legend so much as when studying Ben Sira's Wisdom. For, apart from the difficulties inherent in every author coming down to us from antiquity, such as additions, omissions, and textual corruptions, there is always with Ben Sira the question whether he really meant what he said. We have no reason to question his veracity. "Gainsay not the truth, and humble thyself before God," was an axiom of his. What impairs the value of his statements is the consideration that Ben Sira was, as proved elsewhere,³ rather too much addicted to quoting from the Canonical Writings and giving ample extracts from them. It is, therefore, hard to decide whether his words can always be taken as stating a fact to which he was witness, or conveying a sentiment which he felt, or whether they are to be taken as mere repetitions of Scriptural phrases intended as ornamental flourishes. Thus, for instance, when we read in Ben Sira the various passages about the strange woman, we may reasonably ask, Do they describe the low state of morality in Jerusalem, or are they not bad exaggerations due to the author's thinking of similar passages in the Book of Proverbs? Again, when he devotes almost a whole chapter to a prayer for the deliverance of his people from the hands of the oppressor, does it

indicate the actual hostile relations between Israel and the surrounding nations, or has it to be looked upon as being, in part at least, a mere exercise in a species of lyrics for which certain elegiac Psalms served him as models?

Only an Elijah with his angelic gift of omniscience, and his advantage of being the contemporary of almost all times and ages, could know whether Ben Sira was in the mood for writing history or "doing composition." We poor mortals have to be on our guard not to know too much, and be satisfied with guesses and hypotheses. All that we can aspire to are mere glimpses.

Life with the Jew meant religion, and it is impossible to get a glimpse of his social life without at least throwing a glance at his spiritual life. This, indeed, was even at those remote times fully developed. For not only was the Law in full operation, but Judaism had already entered upon its course of Rabbinism, the main function of which was to bring man with all his various faculties and aspirations under the sway of the Torah. The Canon of the Prophets is also an accomplished fact, and the words of Ben Sira regarding Isaiah,

By a spirit of might he saw the end,
And comforted the mourners of Sion (48 : 24),

thus attributing the "comfort portions" to the same author to whom the first forty chapters are ascribed, are a guarantee also for the formation of tradition as

to the rise and history of the books included in that portion of the Bible long before 200 B. C. E.

Beside these two Canons there existed also "the other Books of the Fathers," as Ben Sira's grandson expresses himself, which probably represented all the writings included in the Hagiographa (*Kethubin*), with the single exception, perhaps, of certain portions in the Book of Daniel.

The discontinuance of prophecy, however, must not be taken as proof of spiritual sterility. Prophecy might have been sorely missed by Ben Sira, but only as a means of prediction, not as a source of religious inspiration. This latter they had "in the book of the Covenant of the Most High God," or the Torah, which, in the words of Ben Sira (?), with whom she is identical with Wisdom, is "the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope." Far from causing sterility or stagnation, Wisdom, or the Torah, says of herself:

. . . . I will water my garden,
And will water abundantly my garden bed;
And, lo, my stream became a river,
And my river became a sea.
I will yet bring instruction to light as the morning,
And will make these things to shine forth afar off.
I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy,
And leave it unto generations of ages (24 : 31).

With such a Torah Ben Sira felt but little need for a new revelation. With the Psalmist he would pray, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Torah," which wondrous things

consist mainly in divining God's will so far as it has any bearing upon life and conduct. This brings us to the Synagogue, or the House of Interpretation (of the Torah), which forms so prominent a feature in the religious life of post-exilic Judaism. With the scanty materials at our disposal it is difficult to define its exact position as a religious factor in those early times. First, however, we must cast a glance at least at the Holy Temple, which, by reason of its long historical prestige, its glorious ritual, performed by a hereditary priesthood and presided over by a pontiff, who not only had a seat in the councils of the nation, but practically represented in his person the whole legislature, must have almost monopolised the affection and the devotion the people bestowed upon their religious institutions. The contents of Chapter 50 of the Wisdom of Ben Sira convey to us a fair idea of what the best of the nation felt when in the presence of their priestly rulers, and what impression the service in the Temple made on them.

The central figure in that chapter is Simon the son of Johanan, "the great one of his brethren and the glory of his people," the patriot and the leader,

Who took thought for his people against the spoiler,
And fortified his city against the besieger (50: 4),

whose personal appearance was so striking that Ben Sira enthusiastically exclaims :

How glorious was he when he looked forth from the tent ;
At his coming forth out of the Sanctuary !
As the morning star in the midst of a cloud,

As the moon at the full in the days of the solemn fast :
As the sun dawning upon the temple of the King,
And as the rainbow seen in the cloud (50 : 5-7).

It should, however, be noticed that a good deal of this enthusiasm may have been due as much to the gorgeous attire of the pontiff as to any personal charm Simon may have possessed. At least, this is the impression we receive from a similar description of a high priest left to us by the anonymous author of the *Aristeas Letter*, who rather revels in the minute description of the various vestments the high priest wore, the robes, the diamonds, the bells, and the pomegranates, and he tells us that the effect produced on him by the sight of the high priest in full canonicals as required by the service, was to feel himself transferred to another world.

In a similar strain are the lines of Ben Sira picturing his hero at the moment when he was performing the service in the Temple :

When he ascended the altar of majesty,
And made glorious the precinct of the Sanctuary,
When he received the pieces out of the hand of his brethren,
While himself standing by the altar fires :
Round him a crown of sons
Like cedar plants in Lebanon.
And they compassed him about like willows of the brook :
All the sons of Aaron in their glory
With the fire-offerings of the Lord in their hand (50 : 12-13).

The culminating point of Ben Sira's enthusiasm is reached with the choral part of the service, in which the laity had its due share in the responses :

Then sounded the sons of Aaron, the priests,
With trumpets of beaten work.

And they sounded, and made their glorious voice heard
To bring to remembrance before the Most High.
All flesh together hasted,
And fell down upon their faces to the earth,
To worship before the Most High,
Before the Holy One of Israel.
And all the people of the land chanted
In prayer before the Merciful.
Then he came down and lifted up his hands
Over all the congregation of Israel,
And the blessing of the Lord was on his lips
And in the name of the Lord he gloried.
And they bowed again a second time,
The people all of them before him (50: 16-22).

Thus Ben Sira. The author of the *Aristeas Letter*, who writes for Gentiles, and dwells at great length on the sacrificial service, remarks that it was carried out in such deep silence as to make one think that not a single human being was to be found anywhere in the place. And yet, he proceeds to say, there were present, as a rule, about seven hundred ministering priests, in addition to the great crowds of the laity who brought the sacrifices. But all this was performed in solemnity and in a manner worthy of the great Deity.

It will, however, be noticed that neither Simon nor the high functionaries surrounding him appear in the capacity of teachers or instructors of the people. The office of teaching was left, as already indicated, to the Synagogue, represented by the Scribes, or Sages, who were recruited from all classes of the people. It

is impossible to define the exact relation of the Synagogue to the Temple. Some writers describe the Synagogue as the altars on the high places of post-exilic Judaism; others, again, fond of modern theological slang, as the Procathedrals of the provinces. All these names, however, are to some extent misleading, implying, as they do, a certain conscious, antagonistic attitude in the Synagogue toward the Temple, for which there is no real evidence. We know fairly that there was a synagogue within the precincts of the Temple. Had there been room for the least suspicion of schismatic tendencies, the priests would as little have allowed it accommodation within the sphere of their jurisdiction as, for instance, the dignitaries of the Vatican could be expected to grant a site for a Protestant chapel in the court of St. Peter's. Nor, indeed, is there known any conscious opposition to the Temple on the part of the Rabbis. Simon ben Shetach, Hillel, and all the other leaders of the Synagogue, were as zealous for the maintenance of the priestly order and the sacrificial worship as ever any high priest was. Some of these leaders were even priests themselves, and served in the Temple in such capacities. More appropriate, therefore, is the traditional designation *Beth ha-Kencseth* (House of Assembly), or the even more ancient and more classic name, *Beth ha-Midrash* (House of Interpretation)⁴, thus confining the activity of the Synagogue mainly to instruction. Worship was only a secondary matter with it.

and stood in no competitive relation to that performed in the Temple, since no amount of prayer ever so sublime could relieve the Jew from the bringing of a meal-offering or a sin-offering when such was his duty in accordance with the injunctions of the Levitical Code. The office of the Synagogue must, therefore, have been looked upon as supplementary or auxiliary to that of the Temple, which in the age of Ben Sira was generally limited to the functions of worship.

If there was any element in the Synagogue which might have led to a rupture with the sister institution, it was not its teaching, but its democratic constitution, which, to some minds, must have contrasted favourably with the hierarchic government of the Temple. "Three crowns there are," said a Rabbi: "the crown of royalty, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of the Torah. The first two are in the exclusive possession of two families, the lineage of David and the descendants of Aaron. But the crown of the Torah is free to all, and can be acquired only by labour. He who wants to take it, let him come and take it, as it is said: 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.'"⁵ Only a few generations after Ben Sira we find Shemaiah and Abtalyon, descendants of proselytes, holding, according to tradition, the high offices of "President" and "Father of the Court of Justice" in the Sanhedrin.

But in spite of its humble claims, and notwithstanding the lowly origin of those who served in it, there can be little doubt that the influence of the

Synagogue as a religious factor even in the times of Ben Sira was more deeply felt than the scarcity of references to it in the contemporary literature would lead us to believe. For, judged in the light of subsequent events, it is not impossible that the very darling priests whom Ben Sira admired as the "crown of sons" developed in later life into the class of traitorous prelates who headed the paganising movement preceding the Maccabæan rise, among whom Jason and the Tobiades were only the more notorious specimens. But whilst the priests, according to the Second Book of Maccabees, had no inclination to serve at the altar, but, despising the Temple and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the "place of exercise,"⁶ there were, as we know from the same source, mighty men in Israel, every one who offered himself willingly for the Law. By those mighty men are meant the Scribes and the Assidæans, but they had a large following, as is clear from another passage, "in the many in Israel who chose to die that they might not profane the Holy Covenant."⁷ Now, in pre-exilic times, the backslidings of the kings and the nobles as a rule involved the apostasy of the whole nation, and if the king "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," the people were sure to do what was worse. But, in the age occupying our attention, we find the strange phenomenon that the bulk of the nation, far from being affected by the apostasy of their political leaders, arrayed themselves in organised resistance, determined to defend their

religion against all attacks from within and without. Considering that these political leaders came mostly from the ranks of the priestly aristocracy, we must assume that there were spiritual forces at work other than the Temple, which prepared the nation for the crisis. This force was the Synagogue, which, by reason of its less elaborate service and its office of instruction, was admirably fitted to place religion within the reach of the people at large, and to teach them to consider man's relations to God as his own personal affair, not to be regulated by the conscience or caprice of either prince or priest.

This instruction was given free, without any expectation of reward, and ungrudgingly. For, as Ben Sira expresses it :

All wisdom cometh from the Lord,

She is with all flesh according to his gift ;

And he gave her freely to them that love him (1 : 1-10),

and as a Rabbi remarked : Man should in this respect imitate the Holy One, blessed be he. As with God it is a gift of free grace, so should man make it a free gift.⁸

Next to the function of teaching came that of prayer. Prayer is, of course, not the invention of the Synagogue. It is, to use the words of an old mystic, as natural an expression of the intimate relations between heaven and earth as courtship between the sexes. Inarticulate whisperings, however, and rapturous effusions at far intervals are sometimes apt to degenerate into mere passing flirtations. The Syna-

gogue, by creating something like a liturgy, appointing times for prayer, and erecting places of worship, gave steadiness and duration to these fitful and uncontrolled emotions, and raised them to the dignity of a proper institution.

Of the contents of this early liturgy little more is known than the pregnant headings of the Benedictions. They are Fathers (אבות), Strengths (גבורות), and Holinesses (קדושות), said to have been introduced by the men of the Great Synagogue, and are thus of pre-Maccabæan origin. The first three blessings of "the original prayers" (sometimes called the Eighteen Benedictions), still in use in the Synagogue, are known under the same headings. The burden of the first (אבות) is the proclaiming of God as the God of the Fathers, and "possessing heaven and earth." It has a striking parallel in Ben Sira's hymn, where thanks are given to the Shield of Abraham, the Rock of Isaac, and the Mighty One of Jacob (51: 12, j, k, l.), whilst the heading "Fathers" strongly reminds one of Ben Sira's similar superscription on Chapter 44, "The Praise of the Fathers of the World" (שבח אבות עולם).

The burden of the third is the praise of God in his attribute of holiness, and has probably its origin in the theophany of Isaiah, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." It is remarkable that the passage commencing, "Now, therefore, O Lord, impose thine awe upon all thy work" (ובכן תן פחדך), which is inserted in this Benediction on the New Year's Day, contains many phrases and expressions to be found in the thirty-sixth

chapter of Ben Sira. There is thus no objection to assuming that the contents of the Fathers and the Holinesses Benedictions of the age of Ben Sira were almost identical with those recited by the Jews of the present day. It is more difficult to say what the exact wording of the Strengths Benediction was. The term itself, *גבורות*, seems to have been suggested by Job 26: 14, "But the thunder of his strength (or power), who can understand?" The Rabbis also speak often of the *גבורות ושמים*, the power of God as shown by his bringing rain. The Strengths Benediction would thus mean the praise of God in his manifestation through nature. The text, however, of the Blessing of the same name in the Jewish Common Prayer-Book is, "Thou, O Lord, art mighty forever, thou quickenest the dead," etc.

This is practically less of a Benediction than the promulgation of a doctrine that the dead will rise one day. And here the question presents itself whether the belief in resurrection was a universally accepted dogma in the days of Ben Sira. I think this question must be answered in the negative. It is true that there is no real evidence that Ben Sira was opposed to this dogma. For such desponding passages as are reproduced by Dr. Edersheim and other writers, tending to show Ben Sira's despair of man's condition after death, may be mere repetitions of the corresponding verses in Ecclesiastes, Job, and Psalms, and need not thus express the author's own views. Yet it must be admitted that there is some truth in

Dr. Edersheim's exclamation: "What becomes of the spirit in Hades is scarcely clear to our writer, as there is no distinct reference to the doctrine of immortality or resurrection in Ben Sira." Dr. Edersheim also complains that Ben Sira is reluctant to enlarge upon the subject of angels, as well as that he is still more chary in his references to Satan. He also suspects that Ben Sira's creed did not include the doctrine of "original sin in the New Testament sense."⁹ I am not responsible for the heterodoxies of Ben Sira, and am in no way anxious to convert him to a scheme of salvation of a much later period. But I may say in his defence, that with Ben Sira all those metaphysical hypotheses and theological certainties probably belonged to those "conceits of men and imagination of thoughts leading them astray," against which he warns us with the words:

Search not the things that are too wonderful for thee,
And seek not that which is hid from thee.
What thou art permitted, think thereupon,
But thou hast no business with the secret things (3: 21-22).

As Ben Sira lived in an age sadly deficient in all theological enterprise, but great in its admiration of the prophets, we can even imagine him replying to an intrusive inquirer: "Hadst thou the same belief in God's just government of the world as an Isaiah had, thou wouldst speak less about man's condition after death, and more about the rights and duties of life, less about angels and more about men, less of Satan and more of God;" and if

The life of man is numbered by days,
The days of Israel are innumerable (37: 25).

The great principle which he would impress upon mortals would be

Prosperity and adversity, life and death,
Poverty and riches come of the Lord (11: 14).

But as to the mysterious workings of Providence in apportioning his lot to each man, nothing remains but to pray,

For great is the mercy of God,
And he revealeth his secret to the meek (3: 20).

I need hardly say that in the days of Hillel and Shammai, the doctrine of immortality was fully developed, and universally accepted by all the Pharisaic Schools.

The Synagogue found a powerful auxiliary in the home. The Sabbath was then more strictly observed than in later ages. The dietary laws, forming a part of the holiness code, and probably kept originally only by the priests, now helped to hallow every Jewish home which came under the influence of the Synagogue. The "Words of the Scribes," as well as most of the other ordinances and laws whose origin can no longer be traced, probably arose about this time. These tended to give distinction and character to the nation at large. The Synagogue became a Temple on a small scale, and the Jewish home a Synagogue in miniature.

When speaking of the artisan, Ben Sira says:

But they will maintain the fabric of the world;
And in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer (38: 34)²⁰.

Let us now consider prayer outside of the appointed place of worship. I therefore propose that we quit Temple and Synagogue, and betake ourselves to more secular surroundings, to learn something of the social life of the Jew. I am the more anxious for this shifting of scenes, since there is some notion abroad that one of the evil effects of the introduction of the "Priestly Code" was to convert a Nation into a Church, thus leading to the impression that a religious life, in the sense of the Torah, was incompatible with what we understand by a civilised polity. The glimpses which the market-place and the Jewish home will now afford us will show how erroneous this conception is. Here we find the Jew occupied as farmer and cattle-breeder, or active as carpenter, builder, iron-smith, potter, and in similar trades. Ben Sira, a *savant* of the most approved type, has no particular sympathy with such vocations, thinking that conversation with animals and the noise of the hammer and the anvil are not conducive to wisdom (38: 33 *et seq.*). He admits, however, that "without these cannot a city be inhabited, and that every one is wise in his works" (38: 32). Hence his injunction,

Hate not appointed service of laborious work,
For it has been apportioned of God" (7: 15).

Ben Sira was less tolerant of the commercial classes, of whom he says:

A merchant shall hardly keep himself from wrong-doing.
And a huckster shall not be acquitted from sin,
For if he stumbles not in this, he stumbles in that (26: 29).²¹

This is quite in harmony with the Rabbinic sentiment, which, though having a higher opinion of the dignity of labour than Ben Sira, declares the hawker and the shop-keeper to be engaged in trades of "bad odour," whilst the latter is said to practise the "handicraft of robbery."¹² These are harsh words, and I can say nothing in mitigation of them, except that they were not actuated by the kindly feelings which the gentleman presiding in his office on the first floor entertains for his dear neighbour behind the counter on the ground floor. It was not a question of wholesale or retail with Ben Sira.

"Offend not" he says, "with a word him who labours truly,
Nor even the hired man who gives his soul" (7 : 20).¹³

His aversion was certainly not social. It was founded on his impression, rightly or wrongly conceived, that

As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stone,
So doth sin stick close between buying and selling (27 : 2).

Of professions we have to record four: the military, the clerical, the scholastic, and the medical. As to the first, we have evidence in contemporary documents that Jews served as soldiers in the Ptolemaic armies. The chivalrous injunction of Ben Sira,

Forget not a companion in the battle,
And forsake him not in thy booty (37 : 6),

also points to the existence of such a class in the age of Ben Sira. But it does not seem that the position of the Tommy Atkins of antiquity was much better than that of his modern brother-in-arms.

"Who will trust" says Ben Sira "a troop of warriors skipping from city to city?" (36 : 31),

whilst in times of peace he was utterly neglected, so that Ben Sira exclaims :

There be two things that grieve my heart,
And the third that makes me angry :
A man of war that suffers poverty (26 : 28).

The story of the Absent-minded Beggar all over again !

The clerical and the scholastic can hardly be called professions in the sense we attach to the word, since the former was not a matter of choice or of special training, but a mere accident of birth, whilst the latter, as indicated above, did not carry any pecuniary compensation with it. Ben Sira's invitation to those he wishes to instruct runs thus :

Turn unto me, O ye fools,
And lodge in my house of learning.
I opened my mouth and spake of her,
Get ye wisdom in your possession without money (51: 23, 25).

With regard to the priests, the Rabbis speak of the twenty-four Gifts, or sources of revenue, of the priesthood.¹⁴ Still, I am inclined to think that it may seriously be doubted whether the common priest, כהן הדיוט, at least, found himself in much better circumstances than the general scribe. Of the twenty-four gifts, the Terumah (heave-offering) was the one on which the priest mostly depended, since it provided him with the products of the soil of which bread was made. This Terumah revenue, however, consisted, as later sources

report, only of a tax of two per cent of the harvest in kind, and was hardly commensurate with the numbers of the priests, who must have constituted a much larger proportion of the population than one in fifty. Moreover, there were various subterfuges making it possible for the people to evade the whole law, of which probably many availed themselves. Nehemiah's surprise expressed in the words, "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them" (13: 10), must have been experienced by many a Jewish authority during the Second Temple. The daily press of those ages does not record any cases of "conscience-money." But even when the "portions" were punctually delivered, there were so many physical and other causes putting the priest into a state of Levitical impurity, and thus excluding him from every contact with "holy things," that the enjoyment of the Terumah and similar gifts was limited to the short intervals when he and his family and their dependents were "painfully clean." In seasons of "defilement" all that he could do with his Terumah was to use it as fuel. Again, on the gifts due him from the various sacrifices, consisting of meats, oils, and cakes, he could depend only for the time he was in active service in the Temple, and this did not extend over two weeks in the year according to the arrangement of "the twenty-four priestly districts."

There must have been, of course, some offices in the Temple worth having, especially those connected with the superintendence of the finances. But it would seem that such sinecures were kept for the

special benefit of "the younger sons and older daughters of the high priests," and were not within the reach of the lower clergy. "Woe unto us," exclaimed an old Rabbi, "because of the House of Ishmael ben Piabi. Woe unto us because of their fist (violence). They themselves are high priests, their sons managers, and their sons-in-law treasurers, whilst their slaves tyrannise over the people with sticks." ¹⁵ The common priests without family patronage had thus little hope of advancement. Indeed, their position was sometimes so desperate that some used to hire themselves out as hands on the threshing-floor, with the purpose of engaging the good-will of the owner of the harvest, who could patronise with his gifts any priest he liked. The Rabbis stigmatise such a procedure as a degradation of the priesthood and as a "pollution of the holy things." ¹⁶ But we who know so much of the story of the perpetual curate with the large family and the small stipend will be inclined rather to pity than to anger. It must probably have been with an eye to this neglect of the priest and his abject poverty that Ben Sira wrote the following lines:

Fear the Lord with all thy soul,
And reverence his priests.
With all thy strength love him that made thee,
And forsake not his ministers.
Honour the Lord and glorify the priest,
And give him his portion even as it is commanded thee
(7: 29,31).

More of a profession in our sense of the word was the medical one. Ben Sira devotes a whole chapter to it, and we learn from it that

The knowledge of the physician shall lift his head,
 He shall stand before the nobles,
 And from the king he shall receive gifts (38: 3, 2).

He was thus, like the modern physician, a student of some sort, and likewise expected to be compensated for his services. Anatomy, physiology, etc., are not likely to have formed a part of his knowledge, though there is evidence from the second century that some Rabbis tried their hands at dissecting dead bodies.¹⁷ As it would seem, it consisted mainly in knowing the virtues of various herbs, for, as Ben Sira says,

God bringeth out medicines from the earth;
 And let a prudent man not refuse them.
 By them doth the physician assuage pain (38: 4, 7).

Ben Sira's pleading,

Was not water made sweet with wood
 To acquaint every man with his [God's] power? (38: 5),
 seems to have been directed against a sort of Jewish scientists who saw in the physician a man counteracting the designs of God. The Rabbinic remark on Exodus 21: 19, "that the Law gave permission to the physician to practise his art,"¹⁸ points also to the existence of such objections on the part of some "peculiar" Jews. "Nothing is new under the sun," not even folly.

Of course, as a pious Jew, Ben Sira perceived in the physician an instrument of Providence, or, as he expresses it,

From God a physician getteth wisdom (38: 2).

Hence his advice to the patient:

Pray unto the Lord, for he will heal (38: 9).

Ben Sira likewise assumes of the physician that

He, too, will supplicate unto God,
That he will prosper to him the mixture (38: 14).

But he distinctly warns the people not to neglect the physician. "Honour the physician," Ben Sira says, "before thou hast need of him" (38: 1), and concludes the chapter with the words:

He that sinneth against his Maker,
Will behave himself proudly against a physician (38: 15).

In consequence of a misreading of the Hebrew by the Greek translator, the versions give

He that sinneth before his Maker,
Let him fall into the hands of the physician.

Now, a community which has artisans and traders, hired men and employers, professionals and privileged classes, could hardly be expected to be free from social inequalities and even social injustices. Ben Sira touches in many a place on these social evils of his time. It was on the basis of such passages that a German Social Democrat, Herr Pfarrer Naumann, declared Ben Sira to have been a prototype of Karl Marx and Lassalle. I know the Pfarrer's article only from quotations given by Pastor Wohlenberg in an Essay headed *Jesus Sirach und die sociale Frage*, in the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*. To judge from these quotations Pfarrer Naumann's main argument is based on the contents of Ben Sira's Wisdom, Chapter 13, in which such lines as the following occur:

Wild asses are the prey of lions in the wilderness;
So poor men are pasture for the rich. . . .

A rich man speaketh and all keep silence;
And what he saith they extol to the clouds.
A poor man speaketh, and they say, who is this?
And if he stumble, they will help to overthrow him (13:
19-23).

These, and other verses like these, testify to the existence of a class rapacious, perfidious, and unscrupulous. Still they must not be interpreted as if they were meant to set up a conflagration to consume the foundations of an old world, replacing it by a state composed of communistic societies and socialistic brotherhoods. Nothing could be further from the thoughts of Ben Sira. The social problem in Israel is old, and is in no way characteristic of the age of Ben Sira. Those interested in the subject will find a fair account of it, and the way prophets and lawgivers tried to deal with it, in Professor Nowack's and Professor Buhl's pamphlets on the social problems in Israel. For our present purpose it will suffice to refer to such passages as the one in Isaiah, "Woe unto them who join house to house and lay field to field, till there is no place" (5: 8), or the one in Amos, "Hear this, ye who swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell the corn . . . that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes?" (8: 5, 6). Nor did the suffering of the exile greatly contribute toward lessening covetousness. For we find, that one of the evils with which Nehemiah had to deal was the rapa-

city of the nobles and princes, who kept in bondage the sons and the daughters of the people, who were compelled to sell them for the purpose of obtaining the barest necessities of life, or to pay the King's tribute (Nehemiah 5: 1-3). The only new feature in Ben Sira is possibly the fact that with him the Hebrew word עשיר, usually meaning "the rich," "the opulent," becomes a sort of equivalent to our word "plutocrat," with this difference, that the עשיר employs his powers for his own unrighteous purposes, and hence is a synonym with רשע, "the wicked." Says Ben Sira:

What fellowship shall wolf have with lamb?

Such is the wicked unto the righteous:

And so is the rich unto a man that is destitute (13: 17-18).¹⁹

And the fact might be easily explained by the aggravating turn matters took under Hellenistic influence, when priests of aristocratic descent became tax-farmers, and the wealthy classes in their train, aping the nobility, probably abandoned themselves to outlandish and ungodly fashions and luxury, so that the rich could be easily described as "the children of the violent among thy people, who do wickedly against the covenant."

In spite, however, of these passionate outbursts of indignation, we must not infer that Ben Sira in any way aspired to the rôle of social reformer. In the first place, Ben Sira was, as already hinted at, a *savant* and a man of the world. Unlike the later Rabbis, who taught that the study of the Torah without a handicraft

must fail in the end, and become the cause of sin, and were even proud of the fact that Hillel, the President of the Sanhedrin, began life as a wood-chopper, Ben Sira believed leisure to be indispensable for the acquisition of wisdom. For it is only "the man devoid of occupation who shall become wise." He will

Seek out the wisdom of all the ancients ;
And will be occupied in prophecies.
He will serve among great men,
And appear before him that ruleth.
He will travel through the land of strange nations
(39: 3-4).

But serving among the great and mixing with courtiers and travelling require leisure and freedom from what Ben Sira would have called "the sordid cares of existence." He could thus hardly have disowned a class which by means of its wealth enjoyed the privileges so dear to his heart.

In the second place, Ben Sira was a highly conservative gentleman, and entertained little doubt of the dogma of "the sacredness of property." It is true that he had a strong suspicion that large fortunes are not always made in the most desirable way.

He that pursues after gold shall not be innocent . . .
For it is a stumbling block to a fool (31: 5, 7).

Still his doctrine was:

Good things and evil, life and death,
Poverty and riches, are from the Lord (11: 14).

Riches and poverty being thus alike meted out by Heaven, every human effort toward bringing about a

radical reform in this respect must prove idle and vain. With many a Jewish philosopher he probably thought that every society has the rich it deserves.

"When the Lord", says Alcharizi, "is wroth against a community, he gives wealth to the wicked and those who shut their hands; when he loves them, he bestows it on the best and most noble-minded."

The only remedies which Ben Sira offers against the evils bound to come with such a state of society, are charity and liberality on the side of the rich, and modesty and resignation on the side of the poor. To the former (the rich man) he says:

He that gives to the poor lendeth to the Lord,
And who rewardeth but he? (35: 11—gloss).

Or:

Be as a father to the orphans,
And instead of a husband to the widows.
And God shall call thee son,
And shall be gracious to thee (4: 10).

But almsgiving alone is not sufficient, for

The gift of a fool shall not profit thee.
He will give little and upbraid much,
And he will open his mouth like a crier (20: 14, 15).

In accordance with the Rabbinic sentiment, that charity is rewarded only in proportion to the graciousness which accompanies it,²⁰ Ben Sira gives the instruction:

My son, to thy good deeds add no blemish,
And no grief of words in any way of giving.
Shall not the dew assuage the scorching heat?
So is a word better than a gift (18: 15-16).

The rich man also receives the solemn warning,

that accumulation of wealth by means of oppressing the poor will be speedily avenged by a righteous God. For

He that buildeth his house with other men's money,
Is like one that gathereth himself stones for the tomb
of his burial (21 : 8).

Nor will church windows or any other donations atone for his iniquities, for

Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor,
Doeth as one that killeth the son before his father's
eyes (34 : 18).

To the latter (the poor) Ben Sira gives the counsel :

With little or much be well satisfied (29 : 23),

since

Better is the life of a poor man under shelter of logs,
Than sumptuous fare in another man's house (29 : 22).

And far from considering poverty a vice,—as Renan somewhere imputes to Judaism,—Ben Sira perceives in it, as in all manner of suffering, a discipline :

For gold is tried in the fire,
And acceptable men in the furnace of adversity (2 : 5).

Hence, as in other cases of suffering, the only safeguards against it are patience and confidence in God, or, as Ben Sira expresses it,

Accept whatsoever is brought upon thee ;
And be long-suffering in the changes of thy humiliation.
Put thy trust in him and he will help thee (2 : 4, 6).

I described Ben Sira as "a man of the world." But no reproach was meant by it. All that this epithet implies is, that Ben Sira represented a type of mind which, lacking both ignorance and en-

thusiasm, made him sadly unfit for the rôle of social reformer. He may perhaps be best described as a gentleman of the old school. In religion the doctrines of the Prophets were good enough for him, and he would, as we have seen, discourage every theological speculation on "things hidden," as impertinent inquisitiveness. In politics the only principle he would urge was strict honesty and forbearance, for, as he says,

Sovereignty is transferred from nation to nation
Because of iniquities, pride, and greed of money (10: 8).

Otherwise, as we can see from his panegyrics, he revered "the powers that be," and as a good conservative probably believed them to be meek and honest.

Whether Ben Sira would have been quite welcome in the circles of those known to history by the name of Chasidim, or Saints, is rather doubtful. They certainly need not have been ashamed of the man whose maxim was

Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent (21: 2).

But if it be true, as some historians maintain, that the saints of that period were given to an ascetic life, they could not have been very eager for the company of one who, as we shall see presently, manifested a great predilection for the good things of this world. If this was the case, I can only be sorry for them. But their loss is our gain. For it is precisely

this touch of worldliness in Ben Sira which affords us that glimpse of the social life of his time for which there is very little room in the work of a mere saint.

The diary of the somewhat profane Pepys—to give an instance near at hand—is both amusing and instructive, whilst the jottings of the godly Nehemiah Wallington are certainly more edifying, but withal dull and unprofitable reading for the historian.

Ben Sira was not profane, but he had a special weakness for a good dinner, declaring that

Him that is liberal of his meats the lips shall bless,
And the testimony of his excellence shall be believed
(31: 23).

With our present object in hand we cannot do better than accompany him to this important social function. I call it a function, for a dinner in Jerusalem to which guests were invited was quite a solemn affair, though it never assumed the sad and sacramental character which distinguishes our banquets. The first duty to be performed would be to appoint by lot or election a chairman, or "head of the banquet house."

The election to this office carried with it, as it seems, a certain dignity, of which vain men were not a little proud. For, among the petty conceits of which a man should not, according to the advice of an old Rabbi, boast to his wife, lest she despise him in her heart, is also this, that he should not go home and say unto his wife, "I have been made the ruler of the feast."²¹ The injunction of Ben Sira,

Have they made thee ruler of a feast?
Be not lifted up (32: 1),

points to the same fact.

What the particular function of this ruler was is not clearly stated, but, as far as we can gather from Ben Sira and succeeding Rabbinic sources, it consisted in arranging the seats, or rather couches, superintending all the preparations, and doing the honours of the occasion:

Take thought for them and then lie down,
Supply their wants and afterwards recline,
That thou mayest rejoice in their honour (32: 1, 2).²²

It is not impossible that he had also to draw up a list of the guests to be invited, since we know from a later source that "the men of a refined mind" in Jerusalem never accepted an invitation, unless they knew beforehand the names of those who were to be their fellow-guests.²³ The hour for dining seems to coincide, in the Rabbinic age at least, with that of the Romans, namely eleven o'clock in the morning.²⁴ The guests were expected to appear some time before, when they were taken to the vestibule, to wait there for their friends, and be treated to refreshments. In Jerusalem the fashion was to pass round three courses of refreshments, during which time a flag was hoisted on the front of the house, as a signal for the guests to appear. With the removal of the flag after the third course of refreshments, the "ten minutes of grace" were over, and the assembled guests entered the dining hall. This was furnished with couches and small

tables, in the arrangement of which more heed was paid, I believe, to the rules of precedence than to those of comfort. The Talmud has a regular "order of the table," which is exceedingly interesting,²⁵ and should be studied in connexion with corresponding matter in Marquardt's *Privatleben der Römer*. Here we must confine ourselves chiefly to Ben Sira.

As to the menu, Ben Sira tells us "the chief thing for life is water and bread" (29:21). This is rather too frugal. More satisfactory is another passage, in which among "the things necessary for life" are given "salt and flour of wheat and honey and milk and the blood of grapes and oil" (39: 26). One would not starve on this, but, as a fact, the Jews were not limited to a vegetarian diet on "good days." The general rule was "no festive dinner without meat." In Jerusalem in particular the butchers were also employed as caterers, and heavily fined if the bill of fare did not answer the conditions under which the banquet was entrusted to them.²⁶ Nor was quantity a sole condition; for, as Ben Sira shrewdly remarks,

The throat devours every meat,

Yet one meat is more pleasant than another (36: 23),
whilst in another place he tells us:

Not all is good for all,

Not every soul chooses every kind (37: 28).

Quality and variety apparently are also insisted upon. We even have it on record that a grateful guest was expected to admire the various kinds of wine which were placed before him, and the different

sorts of pastry and meats of which he had a choice,²⁷ and it is to be assumed that the host on his part was expected to do his best to deserve the compliment. A feast thus meant by no means a fast. What Ben Sira would urge would be gentlemanly behaviour and temperance. Here are a few of his injunctions:

Sittest thou at the table of the great, be not greedy upon it,
And say not, many are the things upon it.
Stretch not thine hand whithersoever it [the eye] looketh,
And thrust not thyself with it into the dish,
Consider thy neighbour's liking by thine own;
And be discreet in every point.
Eat as becometh a man those things which are set before thee;

And eat not greedily, lest thou be hated.
Be first to leave off for manners' sake,
And be not insatiable, lest thou offend.
And if thou sittest among many,
Reach not out thy hand before them (31: 12, 14-18).

Be not insatiable for every luxury
And be not effuse in all dainties.
For in much luxury resteth sickness;
By intemperance many perish utterly,
But he that taketh heed shall add to life (37: 29-31).

Another rule of Ben Sira's is: "At the time of the table multiply not words,"²⁸ which the Talmud paraphrases: "They talk not during meals." It is thus to be supposed that the gaieties did not begin till the actual eating was over. First, however, the toasts had to be given in honour of the host and the more important guests. A good number of these have come down to us from Jewish antiquity. They are mostly of a homiletic nature, but they all have the virtue of brevity.²⁹

The obscure lines in Ben Sira addressed to the "ruler of the feast," "for good manners thou shalt receive favour" (32: 2), may perhaps be construed to mean something similar to our vote of thanks to the chairman. More probably, however, the Hebrew text in this place is corrupt, and should read, as partly suggested by the Greek,

That thou mayest receive a *crown* for thy well-ordering
(32; 2).

Some of the sources seem to hint at a custom, that the man honoured with saying the grace crowned himself with a wreath for this function. The Hebrew formula picturing the saints in the world to come as sitting with wreaths on their heads and feasting on the glory of the Divine Presence, also points to the popularity of this adornment among the Jews. Should the custom just mentioned date back as far as 200 B. C. E., we might perceive in the crown of Ben Sira a preparation for reading the grace after the meal, which also fell within the duties of the ruler of the feast.³⁰

When toasts and grace were over, the gaieties began. These consisted in the joys of the cup and in listening to music. The Biblical term *משתה*, literally, drinking, for feast or banquet, shows the important part wine played on such occasions. Ben Sira and his generation must have had a special fondness for "the blood of the grape," which he defines, as we have seen, as one of "the necessities of life." Thus Ben Sira exclaims:

What life is there to him who is without wine?

It was from the beginning created for joy (31 : 27).

And again he says :

Joy of heart, gladness, and an ornament

Is wine in its *time and proper season* (31 : 28).

Indeed, it would seem that Ben Sira was so eager for the full enjoyment of the liquid "that gladdens God and men," that he would advise men to avoid anything which might prove a disturbing element. His words are :

Rebuke not thy neighbour at a banquet of wine,

Neither set him at naught in his mirth :

Speak not unto him a word of reproach,

And press not upon him by asking him back a debt (31 : 31).

But please notice the qualification of time and season, whilst in another place Ben Sira also insists on measure. For the abuse of wine, as for the abuse of food, Ben Sira has only words of condemnation :

A workman that is a drunkard shall not become rich.

He that loveth flesh shall inherit poverty (19 : 1),

whilst in another passage he says

Show not thyself valiant in wine ;

For wine hath destroyed many (31 : 25).

Drunkenness increaseth the rage of a fool unto his hurt ;

It diminisheth strength and addeth wounds (31 : 30).

Indeed, next to sexual immorality, there is nothing which Ben Sira abhors more than drunkenness. For

Wine and vice will make a man of understanding fall away
(19 : 2)

(namely, from God).

Yet Ben Sira advocated only temperance and mod-

eration, not total abstinence. With his hero, Simon the Just, he might in exceptional cases approve perhaps of a man taking the vows of the Nazarite, who had to refrain from all intoxicating drinks.³¹ But he would certainly never have allowed the constitution of an ascetic order to become the rule of the nation at large. As of iron, salt, and other useful and indispensable articles, he says also of wine:

All these things for good to the godly,
So to the sinner they shall be turned into evil (39: 27).

The wine was accompanied by music. The enjoyment of a concert on festive occasions was not a post-exilic invention. "Woe unto those," we read in Isaiah, "that continue until night till wine inflame them. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are in their feasts" (5: 12). But whilst the prophet protested, as they were probably then a source of abuse, Ben Sira thoroughly relished such performances, for

As a signet of carbuncle in a setting of gold,
So is a concert of music in a banquet of wine.
As a signet of emerald in a work of gold,
So is a strain of music with pleasant wine (32: 5-6).

There is a story in the Talmud of a Rabbi who gave a dinner to his pupils, and who felt rather uncomfortable because of their shyness. Whereupon he said to his servant, "Give wine to the young men, that they may break their silence."³² We may thus imagine that also in the times of Ben Sira the wine served as a signal for the opening of the conversation.

His remarks in this respect are not uninteresting. There is first the venerable, serene, and sedate elder, but liable to become serious and heavy. To him Ben Sira says:

Speak, O elder, for it becometh thee.
And be modestly wise and hinder not song.
In a place for wine pour not forth talk.
Wherefore shouldst thou be overwise out of season? (32 : 3-4).

These lines recall strongly a saying in later Rabbinic literature to the following effect: "Three things make man popular with his fellow-creatures—an open hand, a free table, and a little gaiety." ³³

There is also the assertive youth attending, perhaps, his first banquet, and rather inclined to monopolise the conversation. To him Ben Sira's counsel is:

Speak, young man, if thou must,
With an effort, if he asks thee twice or thrice.
• Compress the word and diminish it exceedingly (32 : 7-8).

He also gives him the gentle hint, that it is modesty and blushing which will endear him to his elders for

Before hail spreadeth lightning,
And before one that is shamefaced favour (32 : 10).

On the other hand, there is the bore of superior airs, who is constantly in fear of committing himself, and tries to impose by his silence. Him Ben Sira would address with the words:

Refrain not from speech in season,
And hide not thy wisdom for the sake of fair-seeming
(4 : 23).

The most unbearable bore is he who never sees a point:

He that telleth a tale to a fool, speaketh to one in slumber,
When he hath told his tale, he will say, what is it? (22 : 8).

Yet it must not be thought that Ben Sira was blind to the evils of the tongue. None perhaps warned against them more emphatically than he. To be saved from them man requires special assistance from Heaven, for which Ben Sira prays in the following words :

Who shall set a watch over my mouth,
And a seal of shrewdness upon my lips,
That I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not? (22 : 27).

O Lord, Father and Master of my life,
Abandon me not to their counsel :
Suffer me not to fall by them (23 : 1).

The pitfalls set by the tongue are slandering, lying, perjuring, backbiting, betraying a friend's secret, and the uttering of obscene words. Nay, the very thought of things impure is sinful and defiling. Hence Ben Sira's exclamation :

Who will set scourges over my thought ;
And a discipline of wisdom over mine heart ?
That they spare me not for mine ignorances,
And my heart pass not by their sins (23 : 2).

But even in the speech without sin Ben Sira is constantly recommending caution, discretion, and reticence :

Lo, thou surround thy vineyard with a hedge,
And make a door and bar for thy mouth (28 : 24).
Hast thou heard a word, let it die with thee,
Take courage, it will not burst thee (19 : 10).

Indeed, the difference between the fool and the wise man is :

The heart of fools is in their mouth ;
But the mouth of wise men is in their heart (21 : 26).

The effusive gentleman would thus have been out of place at a banquet in Jerusalem. But

Wine and music rejoice the heart,
But the love of friends is above them both (40 : 20).

"Friendship or death" was an old Jewish proverb, and no sacrifice was considered too great to obtain friendship.³⁴ "Acquire for thyself a friend or a companion" is the injunction of Joshua ben Perachyah, who lived before our era, but the comment given on it by the Rabbis of later generations is : Let a man buy himself a friend who will eat and drink with him, who will study with him the written and the oral law, and to whom he will entrust all his secrets both of a spiritual and a secular nature.³⁵ Ben Sira, however, the man of the world, and apparently of much experience, which alone, as he maintains, saved him from "danger even unto death," brought about "by cunning lips and weavers of lies," is less effusive, and even inclined to suspicion. His counsel is :

Separate thyself from thy enemies,
And beware of thy friends (6 : 13).

Still he in no way undervalued the blessing of true friendship, and he tells us,

A faithful friend is balm of life,
He that feareth God shall obtain him (6 : 16),

only he would advise to caution, till the friend is tried and found not wanting :

As new wine so is a new friend.

If it becomes thee, thou shalt drink it with gladness (9 : 10).

What one has mainly to guard against in the acquiring of new friends is the tendency toward selfishness, sacrificing all to its own ends. Hence

Let thyself beware of a counsellor,

And know *before* what is his interest (37 : 8).

Very interesting is Ben Sira's counsel as to those from whom we should not take advice :

Take not counsel with a woman about her rival ;

Neither with a coward about war ;

Nor with a merchant about exchange ;

Nor with a buyer about selling ;

Nor with an envious man about thankfulness ;

Nor with an unmerciful man about kindness ;

Nor with a sluggard about any kind of work ;

Nor with a hireling in thy house about finishing his work ;

Nor with an idle servant about much business (37 : 11 *et seq.*).

Prudence and foresight do not exclude charitableness and kindness toward the bulk of mankind. At least they were compatible enough in the view of Ben Sira, who teaches :

Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he has done thee,
And then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest.

Man cherishes anger against man,

And does he seek healing from the Lord ?

Upon a man like himself he hath no mercy,

And does he make supplication for his sins ? (28 : 2-3).

The same thought is expressed in Rabbinic literature by the words : He only who is merciful with mankind may expect mercy from Heaven.³⁶ Such sentiments alone should suffice to discharge Ben Sira from

the guilt of selfishness and cynicism brought against him by a certain school.

But a friend and partner behave as occasion requires,
And a prudent wife is above them (40: 23).

The prudent woman or the good woman is the constant theme of Ben Sira's praises, as he never gets tired of enlarging upon the evils of the bad woman or the foolish woman.

The fraternity of bachelors was not popular with the Jews, the Talmud speaking of the wifeless man as deficient in humanity, whilst Ben Sira stigmatises him as a vagabond, wandering up and down. One of the two types of women a man was thus bound to have. The latter (the bad woman) was considered a punishment of God, "which shall fall to the lot of the sinner," the former (the good wife) was looked upon as a blessing from Heaven and the reward of "such as fear the Lord."

How far heiresses were fashionable in ancient Jerusalem it is difficult to say. At present I can recall one case, of Joshua ben Gamala, whose *fiancée*, the millionairess Maratta bath Boëthus, bought for him, from Agrippa II, the commission of high priest. But it must be owned that he made good use of his opportunities, for it was this Joshua who introduced compulsory education for children from the age of six and upward.³⁷ Still, both the Rabbis and Ben Sira con-

demned such marriages as unworthy and degrading. The words of the latter are :

There is anger and impudence and great reproach
If a woman maintains her husband (25 : 22)

The considerations which should weigh with a man in the choice of a wife are, according to Ben Sira, noble descent, beauty, modesty, thrift, and faithfulness. For

A silent and loving woman is a gift from the Lord,
And there is nothing so much worth as a well-instructed soul.

As the sun when it arises in the highest places of the Lord,
So is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of a man's house (26 : 14, 16),

whilst her devotion to religion is described as follows :

Eternal foundations on solid rock,
And the laws of God in the heart of a saintly woman.³⁸

Another consideration with Ben Sira, as with the later Rabbis, is *יחוס*, or noble pedigree, for

So thy race which thou lovest shall be magnified,
Having the confidence of their good descent (26 : 21).

Good descent, however, is not everything, as children given to haughtiness and extravagance "do stain the nobility of their kindred." To insure "the goodness of the stock" a sound education is indispensable. In the times of Ben Sira this was still left entirely to the father. According to the Rabbis the main duties of a father toward his son consisted in instructing him in the Torah, bringing him into wedlock, and teaching him a trade, or, to be more accurate, teaching him a handicraft.³⁹ Ben Sira, in accord-

ance with his low opinion of labour omits the third duty, and says :

Hast thou sons, instruct them,
And marry wives to them in their youth (7 : 23).

But instruction was a serious business, and could not, in the view of Ben Sira, be successfully carried out without the aid of cane and rod :

Bow down his neck in his youth,
And smite his loins, when he is a little one (30 : 12).
He that loveth his son causeth him oft to feel the rod (30:1).

This is, of course, in accordance with the sentiment expressed so often in the Book of Proverbs and in other parts of the Old Testament. But this fact in no way relieves the severity of such a passage as

Play with him and he will grieve thee ;
Laugh not with him, lest thou have sorrow with him
(30 : 9, 10).

With Ben Sira, as it would seem, the child is neither an angel nor a devil, but a mere mischievous animal. Hence his simile :

An unbroken horse becomes stubborn,
And a son left at large becometh headstrong (30 : 8).

Not less severe was the education of girls, though they are never mentioned in connexion with the infliction of corporal punishment. This decency probably forbade. The more strict was the watch kept over them. Ben Sira's maxim was :

Hast thou daughters, guard them (7 : 24).

The education of a girl tended mainly, to judge

from various Rabbinic sources, toward making a good housewife of her; and consisted in enabling her to attain such accomplishments as weaving, spinning, cooking, baking, nursing, and arranging the furniture.⁴⁰ These were, indeed, the services a woman had to do for her husband. Of course, it was a question of means, and the ability to keep servants might relieve her from some of the more onerous duties. But work of the lighter kind was insisted on even with the richest, as the best remedy against whims and morbidness. The choice of a husband was entirely in the hands of the parents, and success in obtaining good matches for one's offspring was a source of congratulation.

Give away a daughter, and thou shalt have accomplished
a great work,

But join her to a man of understanding (7: 25).

In later Jewish literature daughters are spoken of as the winged birds taking flight after their husbands when married.⁴¹ The hope of the family thus reposed in the male line. The filial duties were many and arduous, the son being bound to maintain his parents in their old age and to serve them. But he was also expected to continue the traditions of the family, becoming heir to its feuds and its alliances. It was a special comfort when a father

Left behind him an avenger against his enemies,
And one to requite kindness to his friends (30: 6).

In fact the immortality of whole chains of progenitors was invested in the dear boy, for

His father dieth and is as though he has not died,
For he has left behind him one like himself (30: 4).

In the map of life with its diversity of colours marking the high-roads of our earthly career with their innumerable by-ways and cross-ways, there is ever facing us in the distance a little dark spot to which all roads and ways converge. The distance is entirely a relative one, varying with our state of health, our sweetness of temper, and the disposition of our mind, morbid or cheerful. But there it remains ever confronting us, and not to be removed out of sight by any variety of euphemism, such as "haven of rest," "land of peace," or "a better world." Its real name is Death.

Our sketch of life in ancient Jerusalem will be more than incomplete, unless we throw a glance, at least, at its decline toward the great borderland.

Death, as a rule, is preceded by illness, and we have already seen the important part assigned to the physician. But he was assisted in his duties by nearly the whole of the community. Ben Sira's injunction is:

Be not slow to visit the sick,
For through this thou shalt be beloved (7: 35).

This duty is known in Rabbinic literature under the term *Bikkur Cholim*, visiting the sick, which, as is clear from certain injunctions in the Talmud in connexion with this duty,⁴² included in the case of need

also nursing and sweeping the room. His friends also prayed for the patient, and it was a part of their duty to remind him to make a will and confess his sins, "for all those who were about to die had to confess their sins." They had also the belief that a confession which concluded with a prayer for forgiveness of sins might bring about his recovery. This is, as is clear from the whole context, the confession to which the Apostle James refers at the end of his Epistle. Ben Sira's counsel to the sick man is:

And from all transgressions cleanse thy heart (38: 10).

Ben Sira, whatever his shortcomings may have been,—indeed, he was hardly what we would call a sound theologian,—was not given to platitudes. He freely admits that death is a very "bitter remembrance" to the prosperous man of great possessions and a capacity for pleasure (31: 1). Yet it had no terrors for him, for he regarded it not in the light of a punishment, but in that of a Divine law, which has to be obeyed and fulfilled with the same submission and devotion as any law in the Torah, and thus he says:

Be not afraid of death, thy covenant.

Remember that those who went before, and they which come after will be with thee.

This is the portion of all flesh from the Lord,

And why dost thou refuse the Torah of the Most High?

(41: 3-4).

When death entered, the funeral ceremonies began, which, at a later period, before the reform of Rabban Gamaliel, were costly and rather showy. They became so heavy a tax, that sometimes the near-

est relatives would take to flight, leaving the corporation to take care of the dead body. Hence Ben Sira's injunction :

According to the custom bury his flesh,
And hide not thyself when they die (38 : 16).

The mourning lasted seven days, in which friends and acquaintances were expected to join :

Be not wanting to them that weep,
And mourn with them that mourn (7 : 34).

In the time of the Rabbis the mourning in the case of parents extended over twelve months. But neither the Rabbis nor Ben Sira approved of prolonged mourning for an indefinite period. The Rabbis perceived in it a presumption on the part of man to be more merciful than God,⁴³ whilst Ben Sira thought that we ought to save our tears for greater calamities :

Weep for the dead, for light hath failed him ;
And weep for a fool, for understanding hath failed him.
Weep more softly for the dead, because he hath found
rest (22 : 11).

Looking back at this life, we feel that for the most part we have been moving in a world very much like ours, guided by the same motives, moved by the same passions, and on the whole striving after the same ideals. The "Sacred Volume" tells us : "Say not that the days of yore were better than these," for it is un wisdom to say so. The lesson to be derived from Ben Sira is, say not that our days are better than the days of yore, for it is ignorance to say so.

ON THE STUDY OF THE TALMUD¹

It is now more than half a century since Renan put the question, "Has Jewish tradition anything to teach us concerning Jesus?" This question must be answered in the negative. As far as the contemporaneous Jewish literature goes, it does not contain a single reference to the founder of Christianity. All the so-called Anti-Christiana collected by mediæval fanatics, and freshened up again by modern ignoramuses, belong to the later centuries, when history and biography had given way to myth and speculation. Almost every Christian sect, every Christian community, created a Christ after its own image or dogma. The Jewish legend—a growth of those later centuries—gave him an aspect of its own, purely apocryphal in its character, neither meant nor ever taken by the Jews as real history.

But if the Rabbis have nothing to tell us about the personality of Jesus, Rabbinic literature has a good deal to teach us about the times in which he lived and laboured. And what is more important is that a thorough study of this literature might, with due discretion, help us to a better understanding of the writings attributed to Jesus and his disciples. To prove this by a few instances will be the aim of my present lecture. It is intended as an invitation to fellow-

students to devote more attention to a branch of literature, from the study of which the Christian divine might derive as much profit as the Jewish Rabbi.

In justice to by-gone times, it should be pointed out that this fact had by no means escaped the searching eyes of Christian scholars of previous generations. They both recognised the importance of the Talmud for a better knowledge of the two Testaments, and applied themselves to an honest study of its contents. As the fruits of these studies, it is sufficient to mention here the *Porta Mosis* of Pocock, the *De Synedriis* of Selden, the *Horae Rabbinicae* of Lightfoot. The Cambridge Platonists also deserve honourable mention. These great and hospitable minds extended the range of their literary acquaintances also to the Rabbis, and the *Select Discourses* of John Smith, and the *Discourse on the Lord's Supper* by Cudworth,² show that this acquaintance was by no means a passing one.

All the names just given belong to England, but the Continent in no way remained behind. The names of the Continental students of Rabbinism are duly recorded in Zunz's *Zur Literatur und Geschichte*, and in other bibliographical works. It is sufficient to mention the name of Reuchlin, who saved the Talmud from the torch which a converted Jew was about to apply to it; the two Buxtorfs, whose works bearing on Rabbinic literature fill pages in the catalogues of the British Museum; and Vitranga, whose books on Rabbinic topics are considered by the best scholars as classical pieces of work.

However, these good things are (as already indicated) a matter of the past. The present shows a decided deterioration. Not only has the number of students devoting themselves to Rabbinic literature shrunk to a miserable minimum, but the quality of the work produced by these latter-day students is such as to show a distinct decay, among the very few praiseworthy exceptions being, for instance, the theological works of Dr. C. Taylor. No student who is interested in the constitution of the ancient Synagogue dare neglect Vitringa's *De Synagoga vetere*, which appeared in the year 1696; but he would certainly lose nothing by omitting to read most of the productions of our own century on the same subject.

The causes of this decay are not to be sought far off. There was first the influence of Schleiermacher, whose interpretation of Christianity formed, as far as its negative side is concerned, one long strained effort to divorce it from Judaism. "I hate historic relations of this sort," he exclaims in one place; and proceeds to say, "every religion is conditioned by itself, and forms an eternal necessity." Schleiermacher's theory of the origin of Christianity was, as is well known, mainly based on the Johannine Gospel, to the disparagement of the Synoptics. The German Marcion had thus every reason to hate history. But as the Talmud still reminded the world of these historical relations, Schleiermacher and his school adopted the course of vulgar *parvenus*, and cut the Rabbis and their literary remains. The second cause

of this decay is the suspicion thrown on all Jewish tradition by the higher criticism. Anybody who has ever read any modern Introductions to the Old Testament will remember, that as a rule they open with a reference to the Rabbinic account of the rise of the Canon, followed by a lengthy exposition showing its utter untrustworthiness. To make matters more complete, efforts were made to disqualify the Rabbis from bearing witness even to events which took place when the Synagogue was a fully-established institution, administered by the ancestors of the Rabbis in their capacity as scribes and saints, or Chasidim. I am referring to the controversy as to the existence of the so-called Great Synagogue, commencing, according to tradition, with Ezra the Scribe, and succeeded by a permanent court, consisting of seventy-one members, called Sanhedrin; which court again was, according to tradition, presided over by two members, the one called Nasi, or Prince-President, whilst the other bore the title of Ab-Beth-Din, Father of the Court of Justice, or Vice-President, both of whom were recruited for the most part from Pharisaic circles. Modern criticism, mainly on the strength of certain passages in Josephus and in the New Testament, maintains a negative attitude toward these accounts. The questions involved are too important and too complicated to be entered upon in a casual way. We need notice only the following fact. This is, that the doubts regarding the traditional account of the constitution of the Sanhedrin were first raised in this century

by Krochmal in the "forties," taken up again by Kuenen in the "sixties," to be followed by Wellhausen in the "eighties." But when reading their works you will observe that, whilst Krochmal respectfully questions tradition, and Kuenen enters into elaborate examination of the documents, Wellhausen summarily dismisses them. Matters have now, indeed, come to such a pass that the principle has been laid down, that it is not necessary to have a thorough knowledge of Rabbinic literature in order to express an opinion about its merits or demerits. It is probably thought that we may condemn it by mere intuition. It is impossible to argue with transcendental ignorance.

Trusting that none of those present have any reason to hate history, or to believe in the superior virtue of ignorance, I will now proceed to the subject of my lecture.

Let me first state the fact that the impression conveyed to the Rabbinic student by the perusal of the New Testament is in parts like that gained by reading certain Rabbinic homilies. On the very threshold of the New Testament he is confronted by a genealogical table,³ a feature not uncommon in the later Rabbinic versions of the Old Testament, which are rather fond of providing Biblical heroes with long pedigrees. They are not always accurate, but have as a rule some edifying purpose in view. The Rabbis even declare that the Book of Chronicles, with its long series of names, has no other purpose than that of

being interpreted,⁴ that is to say, of enabling us to derive some lesson from them. In the fifth chapter of the Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, dealing mostly with round numbers, we read: "There were ten generations from Noah to Abraham to make known how long-suffering God is."

In the second chapter of Matthew the Rabbinic student meets with many features known to him from the Rabbinic narratives about the birth of Abraham; the story of the Magi in particular impresses him as a homiletical illustration of Num. 24: 17, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," which star the interpretation of the Synagogue referred to the star of the Messiah.⁵ This impression grows stronger the more we advance with the reading of the Apostle's writings. Take, for instance, Matt. 3: 9, "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance." This verse, like so many others in the New Testament in which fruits or harvest are used as metaphors or similes in parables, gains both in intensity and in freshness when studied in connexion with many allegorical interpretations of the Rabbis in which the produce of the field and the vineyard play a similar part. One or two instances will not be uninteresting. Thus, with reference to Song of Songs 2: 2, "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters," a famous Rabbi says: There was a king who had a paradise (or garden), which he had laid out with rows of fig-trees, rows of vines, and rows of pomegranates. He put the paradise in the hands of a tenant, and left. In

after days the king came to see what his tenant had accomplished. He found the garden neglected, and full of thorns and thistles. He then brought woodcutters to cut it down. Suddenly he perceived a lily. The king plucked it, and smelled it, and his soul returned upon him. He turned and said, "For the sake of the lily the garden shall be saved." The lily is the Congregation of Israel; intent on the strength of its devotion to the Torah, it saved the world from the destruction to which the generation of the deluge had condemned it by their wicked deeds.⁶

In another place, however, it is the individual who is compared to the lily. Thus, Song of Songs 6: 2, "My beloved went down to his garden to gather the lilies," is applied to the death of the righteous, whose departure from this world is a gathering of flowers undertaken by God himself, who is the beloved one.⁷

In connexion with this we may mention another Rabbinic parable, in which the wheat takes the place of the lily. It is given as an illustration of Song of Songs 7: 3, and Psalm 2: 12. The Scriptural words in the latter place are *נִשְׁקוּ בָר*, which the Rabbis explain to mean "kiss the wheat," illustrating it by the following parable: The straw and the chaff were arguing together. The straw maintained that it was for its sake that the field was sown and ploughed, whilst the stem insisted that it was on its account that the work was undertaken. Thereupon the wheat said, "Wait until the harvest comes, and we shall know with what purpose the field was sown." When the harvest

came, and the work of threshing began, the chaff was scattered to the wind, the stem was given to the flames, whilst the wheat was carefully gathered on the floor. In a similar way the heathens say, "It is for our sake that the world was created," whilst Israel makes the same claim for itself. But wait for the Day of Judgment, when the chaff will be eliminated, and the wheat will be kissed. I need hardly remind you of the parable in Matt. 13.⁸

To return to Chapter 3. I will quote verse 11, in which the Baptist in his testimony to Jesus says, "I, indeed, baptised you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The baptism, of course, represents the *טבילה*, or immersion, of the Bible, enforced by the Rabbis in the case of proselytes. According to some authorities it was also customary with people entering on a course of repentance.⁹ The expression, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear," reminds one of the similar Talmudic phrase, running, "he who will explain to me a certain word, I will carry his cloth after him to the bath,"¹⁰ that is to say, he will show submission to his authority by performing menial work for him. As to the term, "baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire," the latter has a parallel in the Talmudic dictum, that the main *טבילה*, immersion, as a means of purification, is by fire.¹¹ The former term, "baptism by the Holy Ghost," is certainly obscure, and has given a good deal of trouble to the

commentators ; but it must have been readily understood by the Jews, who even spoke of drawing the Holy Spirit, שואבין רוח הקודש, a term applied only to liquids.¹² Note also the following passage from a sermon by R. Akiba: "Blessed are ye Israelites. Before whom are ye purified, and who is he who purifies you? Ye are purified before your Father in Heaven, and it is he who purifies you," as it is said, "The Lord is the *Mikweh* of Israel."¹³ The word מִקְוֵה is taken in the sense in which it occurs several times in the Pentateuch, meaning "a gathering of waters," or a ritual bath, taken after various kinds of uncleanness. The Rabbi then derives from the words of Jeremiah (17: 13) the lesson, that as the *Mikweh* is the means of purification for defilement (in the sense of the Levitical legislation), so God is the source of purity for Israel. It should be borne in mind, that according to the Rabbinic interpretation, the term טומאה, "defilement," applies to all kinds of sins, ritual as well as moral, especially the latter, whilst the process of purifying mostly concerns the heart. "Purify our hearts, that we serve thee in truth," is the constant prayer of the Synagogue.

טְהִירָה, or "purification," is, according to the mystic R. Phinehas ben Jair, of the second century, one of the higher rungs on the ladder leading to the attainment of the holy spirit.¹⁴ I do not know how far this conception may be connected with the gospel narrative, according to which the baptism of Jesus (or the Taharah of Jesus) was followed by the descent of the

holy spirit. If R. Phinehas ben Jair could be taken, as some maintain, as one of the last representatives of the Essenes, there would, indeed, be no objection to see in the synoptic account an illustration of the principle laid down by these mystics. At any rate, it may serve as a transition to the verses I am about to quote from Matt. 3 (16, 17), running thus: "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway from the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him: and, lo, a voice out of the heavens saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." The symbolism of the Holy Ghost by a dove is a common notion in Rabbinic literature. The dove is considered as the most chaste among the birds, never forsaking her mate. The congregation of Israel, which never betrays its God, is therefore compared to the dove.¹⁵ "Once upon a time," so runs a Rabbinic legend, which I give here in substance, "King David went out on a hawking expedition. Whereupon Satan came and turned himself into a deer, which David tried to hit, but could not reach. Constantly pursuing the animal, David was thus carried from his suite, owing to the machinations of Satan, into the land of the Philistines, where he was suddenly confronted by the relatives of Goliath, who were all thirsting for his blood. Thereupon a dove descended before Abishai, who had remained behind in the king's camp, and began to emit wailing tones. Abishai at once understood its mean-

ing, saying, 'The congregation of Israel is compared to a dove, as it is said, Wings of a dove covered with silver' (Ps. 68: 14), and thus interpreted the appearance of the dove as a sign that King David, the hope of Israel, was in danger of his life, and he set out to his rescue."¹⁶

A closer parallel, however, is the following passage attributed to the well-known mystic, Ben Soma, a younger contemporary of the Apostles. The passage runs thus: R. Joshua ben Hananiah was standing upon the terrace of the Temple mountain. Ben Soma saw him, but did not rise up before him (as he ought to have done, seeing that R. Joshua was his master). R. Joshua asked him, "Whence and whither, Ben Soma?" The answer Ben Soma gave him was, "I was looking at (or rather meditating upon) the upper waters (above the firmament) and the under waters (under the firmament). The space between the two waters is not broader than three fingers; as it is said, 'the Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters,' like a dove brooding over her young, partly touching them and partly not touching them."¹⁷

I need hardly say that we have here to deal with a fragment of a Jewish Gnosis, and I must refer the reader to the works of Joel, Graetz, and Freudenthal, for more information upon this point, but it must be noted that some parallel passages read "eagle" instead of "dove." Deut. 32: 11 lends some countenance to this reading, but the parallels just quoted from the New Testament as well as the famous vision of R.

Jose, in which the daughter-voice is complaining in a tender voice like a dove, saying "Woe unto the father, whose children were expelled from his table,"¹⁸ speak for the reading given first.

After the appearance of the Holy Ghost, Jesus is greeted, as we have seen, by a voice from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." These words represent, as rightly remarked by the commentators, a combined paraphrase of Ps. 2: 7 and Isa. 41: 1. The voice from heaven, as is well known, corresponds with the Rabbinic "daughter of a voice" (בת קול), or daughter-voice, occupying the third place in the scale of revelation. I cannot enter here into the various aspects and functions of the daughter-voice, about which a good deal has been written, but I should like to note two peculiar features.¹⁹

The first is, that in many cases the daughter-voice, when employed as a means of revelation, finds its expression, not in a fresh message, but in reproducing some verse or sentence from the Hebrew Bible. Thus it is recorded by the Rabbis that when they (the authorities) intended to include King Solomon in the number of those who forfeited their salvation, the daughter-voice put in the protest of heaven, in the words of Job (34: 33), "Shall his recompense be as thou wilt, that thou refusest it?"²⁰ The great reconciliation, again, of God with the house of David, as represented by the exiled king Jeconiah, when the Babylonian captivity was nearing its end, was announced by the daughter-voice in the words of Jere-

miah, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God" (3: 22).²¹ It should be noted, however, that the daughter-voice is not confined in its quotations to the Canonical Scriptures. Sometimes the daughter-voice even quotes sentences from the Apocrypha. This was the case in Jabneh, where the Sanhedrin met after the destruction of the Temple. There a voice from heaven was heard reproducing a verse from the Wisdom of Ben Sira (3: 22), "Ye have no need of the things that are secret."²² It is true that Ben Sira has "thou hast no need" (in the singular), but it would seem as if the voice from heaven is not always very exact in its quotations, adapting them in its own way to the message to be announced. Thus, for instance, on the occasion of Saul's disobeying the commandment of God regarding the extermination of the Amalekites, there came the daughter-voice and said unto him, "Be not more righteous than thy Maker," אל תצדק יתר מקונך.²³ We will easily recognise in this warning the words of Ecclesiastes (7: 16), "Be not righteous overmuch," אל תצדק הרבה, only that הרבה was altered into יתר, required by the prefix of מקונך, which word was apparently added by the voice from heaven.

Another important feature of the daughter-voice is, that in some cases it is audible only to those who are prepared to hear it. "Every day," says the rather mystically inclined R. Joshua ben Levi, "goes forth a voice from Mount Sinai, and makes proclama-

tion and says, 'Woe to the creatures for their contempt of the Torah.'" As rightly pointed out by the commentators, this voice is heard only by fine, sensitive natures that are susceptible to Divine messages even after the discontinuance of prophecy.²⁴ In this case the daughter-voice becomes something quite subjective, and loses a great deal of its authoritative character. The renegade Elisha ben Abuyah, or, as he is commonly called, אחר, the "other one," in his despair of "doing repentance", heard a voice coming straight from behind the throne of God, saying unto him, "Come back, ye backsliding children, except thou 'other one,'" and thus he abandoned himself to an immoral life.²⁵ Contrast this story with that of Manasseh, the worst sinner among the kings of Judah. It is to this effect. When the captains of the King of Assyria defeated Manasseh and put him among thorns, and inflicted upon him the most cruel tortures, he invoked all the strange gods he was in the habit of worshipping, but no relief came. Suddenly he said, "I remember my father once made me read the following verses (Deut. 4: 30, 31), 'When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, . . . return thou to the Lord thy God. For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee nor destroy thee.'" He then began to address his prayers to God. The angels—in a most unangelic way, I am sorry to say—shut up the gates of heaven against his prayer, but the Holy One, blessed be he, said, "If I do not receive him, I shut the gate in the

face of repentance.' And thus he was entreated of him and heard his supplication.'"²⁶ The moral of the two stories is, that the "other one" trusted to fresh messages, and went to perdition, while Manasseh fell back upon the family Bible and was saved. It is probable that it was such moral catastrophes as recorded in the case of the "other one" which brought the voice of heaven into disrepute. The verdict of the Rabbis in the second century was, that no attention is to be paid to it when it presumes to decide against the moral conviction of the majority. The Torah is not in heaven.²⁷ Its interpretation is left to the conscience of catholic Israel.

Now it is this conscience of Israel which is not satisfied with the lesson to be derived from the Scriptures at the first glance, or rather the first hearing, but insists upon its expansion. Thus when interpreting Lev. 19: 36, the Rabbis somehow managed to derive from it the law of "let your speech be yea, yea; nay, nay."²⁸ Again, when commenting upon the seventh commandment, they interpreted it in such a way as to include the prohibition of even an unchaste look or immoral thought.²⁹ The rules of interpretation by which such maxims were derived from the Scriptures would perhaps not satisfy the modern philologist. They, indeed, belong to the "second sense" of the Scriptures, the sense which is the heart and soul of all history and development. "God hath spoken once, twice I have heard this" (Ps. 62: 12), which verse is interpreted by the Rabbis to mean that

Scripture is capable of many interpretations or hearings.³⁰ But it is interesting to find that these interpretations of the Scriptures tending to improve upon the "first sense" are sometimes introduced by the formula: "I might hear so-and-so, therefore there is a teaching to say that," etc. *תלמוד לומר* ... *שימע אני*.³¹ Put into modern language the formula means this: The words of the Scriptures might be at the first glance (or first hearing) conceived to have this or that meaning, but if we consider the context or the way in which the sentences are worded, we must arrive at a different conclusion. This parallel may perhaps throw some light on the expression *ἤκούσατε*, "you have heard that it was said . . . but I say unto you," a phrase frequent in the Sermon on the Mount. After the declaration made by Jesus of his attachment to the Torah, it is not likely that he would quote passages from it showing its inferiority. The only way to get over the difficulty is to assume that Jesus used some such phrase as the one just quoted, *שימע אני*, "I might hear," or "one might hear," that is to say, "one might be mistaken in pressing the literal sense of the verses in question too closely." Against such a narrow way of dealing with Scripture he warned his disciples by some formula, as *תלמוד לומר*, "there is a teaching to say that the words must not be taken in such a sense." But the formula being a strictly Rabbinic idiom, it was not rendered quite accurately by the Greek translator. Hence the apparent contradiction between Matt. 3: 17, 20, and the matter follow-

ing upon these verses. I only wish to add that in Rabbinic literature it is sometimes God himself who undertakes such rectifications. Thus we read in an ancient Midrash with reference to Jer. 4: 2, "And thou shalt swear as the Lord liveth, in truth and in judgment": "The Holy One, blessed be he, said unto Israel, 'Think not that you may swear by my name, even in truth. You may not do so unless you have obtained that high degree of sanctity by which Abraham, Joseph, and Job were distinguished, who were called God-fearing men (יְרֵאִי אֱלֹהִים).'" This limitation of swearing, even in truth, is indicated according to the Rabbis in Deut. 20: 10, which verse is interpreted to mean, "If thou fearest thy God, and art exclusively in his service, thou mayest swear by his name," not otherwise.³²

Having mentioned the name of the patriarch, I may perhaps state the fact that, beside the epithets "the God-fearing" Abraham, or Abraham "the friend of God," Abraham also bears in Rabbinic literature the title of Rock. The wording of the Rabbinical passage and the terms used in it will not be uninteresting to the student of the New Testament. In Matt. 16: 18 we read: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art *Petros*, and upon this *petra* I will build my church." The Rabbinic passage forms an illustration of Num. 23: 9, "For from the top of the rocks I see him," and runs thus: There was a king who desired to build, and to lay foundations he dug constantly deeper, but found only a swamp. At last

he dug and found a *petra* (this is the very word the Rabbi uses). He said, "On this spot I shall build and lay the foundations." So the Holy One, blessed be he, desired to create the world, but meditating upon the generations of Enoch and the deluge, he said, "How shall I create the world seeing that those wicked men will only provoke me?" But as soon as God perceived that there would rise an Abraham, he said, "Behold, I have found the *petra* upon which to build and to lay foundations." Therefore he called Abraham Rock, as it is said, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn. Look unto Abraham, your father" (Isa. 51: 1, 2).³³

The parallels given so far have been more according to the letter. I will now give one or two parallels according to the spirit.

I have already referred to the attempts made by various authors to describe the life and times of Jesus Christ. The best book of this class is undoubtedly Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*. It is a very learned work, particularly as far as the Greek and Roman documents are concerned. Its treatment of such topics as the geography of Palestine, the topography of Jerusalem, the plan of the Temple, and kindred subjects, is almost perfect. A most excellent feature in it is the completeness of its bibliography, there being hardly any dissertation or article in any of the learned periodicals which is not duly registered by the author. But all these fine things are, to use a quaint Rabbinic phrase, only

"after-courses of wisdom." Bibliography in particular is not even an after-course. It partakes more of the nature of the menu served sometimes by very ignorant waiters, possessing neither judgment nor discretion. The general vice attaching to this whole class of works is, that no attempt is made in them to gain acquaintance with the inner life of the Jewish nation at the period about which they write. Take, for instance, the subject of prayer. Considering that pre-Christian Judaism gave to the world the Psalms, and that post-Christian Judaism produced one of the richest liturgies; considering again that among the various prayers which have come down to us through the medium of the Talmud, there is also one that forms a close parallel to the "Lord's Prayer;" considering all this, one might expect that also in the times of Jesus the Jews were able to pray, and in fact did pray. The contents of their prayers might be of the greatest importance for the student, expressing as they probably did the religious sentiments of the age and the ideal aspirations of the nation. But what our theological waiters dish up is a minimum of prayer dressed up in a quantity of rubrics, in such a fashion as to stigmatise their authors as miserable pedants. And no attempt is made to enter into the spirit of even this minimum. No explanation is given, for instance, of the meaning of the terms "the kingdom of heaven," the yoke of which the Rabbi was supposed to receive upon himself, the "Hear, O Israel," etc. The terms "sanctification of the name of God," "Father in

heaven," and "renewed world," are also frequent in Jewish literature and in the Jewish prayer-book, but no sufficient attention is given to them. To my knowledge Dalman is the only modern Christian scholar who recognises the importance of these terms, and similar ones, in their bearing upon a clearer understanding of the New Testament, and has at least made an attempt at their analysis in his book, *Die Worte Jesu*.

Another important point, which has never been properly examined, is the unique position which the *Keneseth Israel*, the congregation of Israel, or ideal Israel, occupies in Rabbinic theology. Yet it forms a striking parallel to that held by Jesus in Christian theology. The Keneseth Israel was, like the Spirit of the Messiah, created before the world was called into existence. "She is the beloved of God, in whom he rejoices;" and there is no endearing epithet in the language, such as son, daughter, brother, sister, bride, mother, lamb, or eye, which is not, according to the Rabbis, applied by the Scriptures to express the intimate relation between God and the Keneseth Israel. Not even the title of "god," of which God is otherwise so jealous, is denied to Israel, as it is written, "I have said, Ye are gods." Nay, God even says to Moses, "Exalt Israel as much as thou canst, for it is as if thou wert exalting me;" whilst he who denies Israel or rises against Israel denies God. In fact, it is only through the witness of Israel that God is God, and he would cease to be so were Israel to disappear, as it is written, "Ye are my witnesses, . . . and I am

God.”³⁴ But there is no fear of such a calamity. Israel is as eternal as the universe, and forms the rock on which the world was built. As a rock towering up in the sea, so the Keneseth Israel stands out in history, defying all tempests and temptations; for “many waters cannot quench the love” between God and the Keneseth Israel.³⁵ She is, indeed, approached by Satan and the nations of the world with the seducing words, “What is thy beloved more than another? Beautiful and lovely thou art, if thou wilt mingle among us. Why dost thou permit thyself to go through fire for his sake, to be crucified for his name? Come unto us, where all the dignities in our power await thee.” But Israel resists all temptations; they point to their connexion with God throughout their history, to his love unto them, shown by conferring upon them the gift of holiness, which even a Balaam envied, and to the promise held out to them of the Messianic times, when suffering will cease and Israel will revel in the glory of God.”³⁶ These few quotations suffice to show what an interesting chapter might be added to our knowledge of comparative theology.

Again, our knowledge of the spiritual history of the Jews during the first centuries of our era might be enriched by a chapter on miracles. Starting from the principle that miracles can be explained only by more miracles, an attempt was made some years ago by a student to draw up a list of the wonder-workings of the Rabbis recorded in the Talmud and the Midra-

shim. He applied himself to the reading of these works, but his reading was only cursory. The list therefore is not complete. Still it yielded a harvest of not less than two hundred and fifty miracles. They cover all classes of supernatural workings recorded in the Bible, but occur with much greater frequency.

A repetition of these miracles would be tiresome. I will content myself with reproducing a story from Tractate Chagigah, which will illustrate to you how much even the individual Jew shared in the glories conferred upon the Keneseth Israel. I am speaking, of course, of that individual who is described by the Rabbis as one "who labours in the Torah for its own sake, who is called a lover of God and a lover of humanity. Unto him kingdom and authority are given. Unto him the secrets of the Torah are revealed." The term "authority," by the way, is given with the word ממשלה, suggested probably by Ben Sira 45: 17, וימשילו בחוק ומשפט, "and he made him have authority over statute and judgment;" whilst Matt. 7: 29, "and he taught them as one having authority," was probably suggested by Ben Sira 3: 10, ומושל בה ילמדנה, "and he who has authority over it shall teach it." As a man of such authority we may consider R. Johanan ben Zakkai, the hero of the story I am about to relate. He was the younger member of the "Eighty Club" of the school of Hillel, and thus a contemporary of the Apostles, though he survived them. He was an eye-witness of the terrible

catastrophe of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, an event which he prophesied forty years before it took place. He is best known by the school he established in Jabneh, whither the Sanhedrin, and with them the Divine Presence presiding over this assembly, emigrated after the fall of Jerusalem. There (in Jabneh) he died about 108 c. E.

It is related that Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai was riding upon his ass on the road, while his pupil, R. Eleazar ben Arach, was walking behind him. Said R. Eleazar to him, "Master, teach me a chapter about the matter relating to the chariot," that is, the vision in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The master declined, preferring to hear the pupil. R. Eleazar said again, "Wilt thou permit me to repeat in thy presence one thing which thou hast taught me?" to which he gave his assent. R. Johanan then dismounted from his ass, and wrapped himself in his gown, and seated himself upon a stone under an olive-tree. He said it was disrespectful that he should be riding on his beast, whilst his pupil was lecturing on such awful mysteries, and the *Shechinah* (the Divine Presence) and the *Malache ha-Shareth* (the angels-in-waiting) were accompanying them. Immediately R. Eleazar began his exposition. And there came down fire from heaven and encircled them and the whole field. And the angels assembled and came to hearken, as the sons of men assemble and come to look on at the festivities of bride and bridegroom. And the terebinth-trees in the field opened their mouths and uttered a song,

"Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps. . . . Fruitful trees and all cedars, . . . praise ye the Lord." And an angel answered from the fire and said, "This is the matter of the chariot." When he had finished, R. Johanan ben Zakkai stood up and kissed him on his head, saying, "Praised be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who has given our father Abraham a wise son, who knows how to discourse on the glory of our Father in heaven." So much for the story. I need hardly recall to your mind the parallels in the Book of Enoch and in the New Testament.³⁷

My lecture is at an end, not so the subject it treats. To accomplish the latter in a properly critical and scientific manner the aid of fellow-workers is necessary. I have often heard the wish expressed that a history of the rise of Christianity might be written by a Jew who could bring Rabbinic learning to bear upon the subject. I do not think that the time is as yet ripe for such an experiment. The best thing to be done at present is, that Christians devote themselves to the study of Rabbinic literature. The history which would be written after such study would certainly be more scientific and more critical, though perhaps less edifying.